

Minutes of 5th AGM, Pearson Hall, 15 November 2008

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

John Edmonds welcomed those present and congratulated Diana Coulter on the first coloured Annual Report.

2. APOLOGIES AND MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Apologies had been received from Mr and Mrs J Hammond, Mr and Mrs A Driver, Mr and Mrs P Hamblin, Mr and Mrs N Marks, Mr and Mrs S Chapman, Revd. and Mrs J Taylor, Mr and Mrs N Siney, Mr and Mrs B Arrowsmith, Mr and Mrs B Guthrie, Mr M Stansfield, Mr and Mrs A Williams and Dr B O'Callaghan.

Minutes of the previous AGM had been distributed. Acceptance was proposed by John Russell, seconded by Carole Barnett and unanimously agreed and signed.

3. BRIEF REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's report. Following Chris Clarke's retirement, the Executive had elected John Edmonds as Chairman until this AGM. He reported that the Society had had another successful year and thanked everyone on the Executive for their support. After 4 years of sterling work Nick Marks was retiring, but Annabella Marks had agreed to stand for election. Pam Byrne had also agreed to stand, which would provide a good liaison with Sonning Parish Council.

b) Planning & Environment Report. Unfortunately, Chairman Brian O'Callaghan was unwell, so Bob Hine, a member of the Panel, spoke briefly about their work saying that over the past year approximately 75 planning applications had been submitted to Wokingham, and where appropriate the Panel had considered these in detail. He drew people's attention to the four photographs contained in the report which highlighted the Society's attempt to increase awareness of our historical environment.

c) Traffic & Transport. Chairman Ken Henderson referred to his report highlighting the change to Reading's proposal for a new IDR system and the work of Wokingham Borough Council.

d) Education Report. Co-ordinator Diana Coulter said her written report covered the work of the panel, but she would like to give special mention to unsung heroes like Jeremy Gilmore for his IT support for the *Village Voices* exhibition which would be held on 11 – 13 September 2009. Mary Chapman was unable to be present, but the project was making excellent progress under her expert leadership. Ten banners would be needed as part of the exhibition. Each would cost about £100, and the overall cost would be in the region of £3,000. Grants had been applied for, but help from members of the Society would also be appreciated. Thanks were also due to Mark Green who had conducted his first walk during the year.

e) Social Committee. Co-ordinator Penny Feathers referred those present to her printed report and thanked the committee and all the members of the Society who offered their help for special events. Without everyone's support, it would not be possible to organise the social side of the society's agenda.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness presented his report which had already been circulated. There being no questions John Edmonds thanked him for producing clear accounts and they were accepted unanimously.

5. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

The Chairman thanked Allan Williams for agreeing to continue as Independent Examiner. His appointment was proposed by Mark Green, seconded by Colin Pierce and unanimously agreed.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman said the nominations for the election of officers were Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by John Edmonds, seconded by Keith Nichols; Vice Chairman: Brian O'Callaghan, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by John Edmonds; Honorary Secretary: Penny Feathers, proposed by Malcolm Stansfield, seconded by Daphne Payne; and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Brian Arrowsmith, seconded by Ken Peters. These were unanimously elected en bloc.

7. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The nominations were: Carole Barnett, proposed by Kate Garstone, seconded by Catherine Penny; Pamela Byrne, proposed by John Edmonds, seconded by Bob Hine; Diana Coulter, proposed by Caroline Rimell, seconded by John Argent; Mark Green, proposed by Lesley Green, seconded by Penny Feathers; and Annabella Marks, proposed by Lynette Padfield, seconded by Jane Gascoine. These were unanimously elected en bloc.

8. SOCIETY VICE PRESIDENT

John Edmonds proposed and Bob Hine seconded that Chris Clarke, the society's first chairman whose hard work and excellent leadership had provided such a firm foundation should be elected Vice President. It was also proposed that both he and his wife Christine be given honorary membership. This motion was carried unanimously.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed.



The Education Panel experimented with visits beyond Sonning using interesting places to throw light on Sonning and Sonning Eye. Mapledurham Mill, visited in October 2008, is a working flour mill on a smaller scale than Sonning Mill once was. The London Wetland Centre in Barnes, visited in May 2009, provided an opportunity to consider how Sonning Eye might look once gravel extraction has been completed. (Courtesy: Diana Coulter (left); Alastair Driver (right))



2008/2009

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2008/2009

Executive Committee Report

Bob Hine, Chairman

The Committee's present members are: Bob Hine (Chairman), Brian O'Callaghan (Vice Chairman), Penny Feathers (Hon. Secretary), Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Carole Barnett, Diana Coulter, Mark Green, Ken Henderson*, Annabella Marks, Lynette Padfield* and Gary Robinson* (*denotes co-opted).

The year has been coloured by the demise of The Civic Trust, a surprising casualty of the 'credit crunch'. The division that focused on the Heritage Open Days Weekends was speedily found a new home with English Heritage which was already co-organiser. Continuing support for civic societies continues to be discussed widely, and an outcome is expected early in 2010.

Our own Executive held six meetings during the year which were well attended. Sally Hughes resigned earlier in the year and we thank her for her considerable contribution towards the continuous growth of the Society since its inception five years ago.

Pam Byrne also stepped down following her retirement from Sonning Parish Council and we thank her for creating a valuable link for the Society since her election to the Executive last year. It is particularly pleasing to note that Mark Green will continue to maintain this link having recently joined the Parish Council.

The Society has experienced another exciting year. The "Village Voices" exhibition was staged in a most professional way over three days in the Pearson Hall. Mary Chapman co-ordinated the project together with Judy Baldwin, Lesley Green, Annabella Marks and Jean Milbourn. This small team

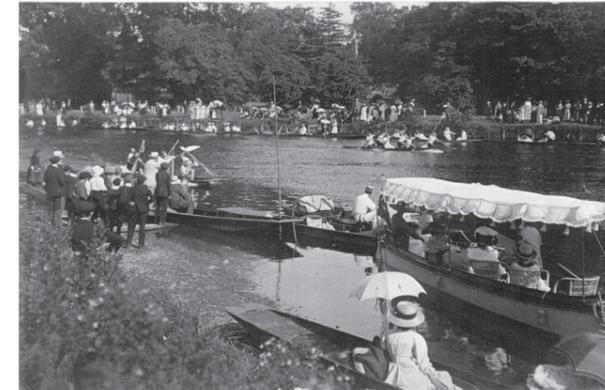
so ably led by Mary, deserve our hearty congratulations. It is encouraging to note that the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading will be exhibiting the project from January to April 2010.

The activities of the Society's Panels are reported on in more detail overleaf. I would just like to add in this my first year as Chairman, how encouraged I have been by the support and willingness of the Executive team and their Panels. This includes the combining of

"Traffic and Transport" with "Planning and Environment". My thanks to Ken Henderson and Brian O'Callaghan for all they have achieved.

Penny Feathers Hon. Secretary will stand down at the AGM. She has served the Society well during the first five years and we warmly thank her for all she has done.

Finally, *Bridge*, has been further enhanced with all editions now in colour. My thanks to Diana Coulter for producing this high quality newsletter to an increasing membership, currently involving some 221 and 3 corporate members.



'Village Voices' attracted about 1,000 visitors of all ages during 11-13 September 2009: a huge success for Mary Chapman and her team.



Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2009

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

We have had a very successful year which has been dominated by the *Village Voices* project and the General Fund is analysed between the project and Other Activities.

Village Voices income is analysed on the statement and the expenditure £1,322.62 covers many different costs associated with it, the major cost being the hire of computers £574.68. At the end of the financial year the project shows a credit balance of £3,560.32. However, there are many outstanding costs which will be accounted for in the next financial year.

There has also been much activity in other areas. Our membership continues to grow, up 6% on the year totalling £1,179.00. The profit on our educational activities is £354.11 and net income from the AGM, donations received and

bank interest received amounts to £107.85. This overall net income of £1640.96 is offset by the cost of producing our quarterly newsletter £542.63, subscriptions paid £80.00, donations made £56.12, general expenses £108.16 and insurance £256.24. Therefore the excess of income over expenditure for the current year for other activities is £597.81 which together with the previous year's balance brought forward £2,600.93 shows a balance carried forward £3,198.74.

During the year, the Society was accepted by HM Revenue & Customs as a charity for tax purposes. This will enable the society in future to receive bank interest without income tax deduction.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2009

	£	
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2008		
General	2,600.93	
Village Voices	432.94	
		3,033.87
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR		
General	597.81	
Village Voices	3,127.38	
		3,725.19
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2009		
General	3,198.74	
Village Voices	3,560.32	
		<u>6,759.06</u>
GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:		
CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	6,065.33	
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	652.81	
CASH IN HAND	30.00	
WINE & SOFT DRINKS STOCK	10.92	
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2009	<u>6,759.06</u>	

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2008 TO 31ST AUGUST 2009

INCOME	EXPENDITURE	£	£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,179.00 NEWSLETTER	1,179.00	542.63
AGM	741.00 AGM	741.00	695.13
MAPLEDURHAM MILL VISIT	60.00 MAPLEDURHAM MILL VISIT	60.00	100.00
SAXON SKELETONS TALK	376.50 SAXON SKELETONS TALK	376.50	223.88
LONDON WETLAND CENTRE VISIT	141.00 LONDON WETLAND CENTRE VISIT	141.00	110.00
SONNING'S FIREMEN TALK	154.50 SONNING'S FIREMEN TALK	154.50	126.17
HERITAGE TRAIL	150.00 HERITAGE TRAIL	150.00	63.34
VILLAGE WALKS	70.00 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS	70.00	55.00
DONATIONS	40.00 SUBSCRIPTIONS	40.00	80.00
WOODYER BOOKLETS	80.50 DONATIONS	80.50	56.12
BANK INTEREST	21.98 GENERAL EXPENSES	21.98	108.16
	LIABILITY INSURANCE		256.24
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:	VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE		1,322.62
FIRE BRIGADE TRUST - DONATION	600.00	600.00	
OTHER DONATIONS	920.00 EXCESS INCOME OVER	920.00	
AWARDS FOR ALL - GRANT	2,445.00 EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	2,445.00	
ERNEST COOK TRUST - GRANT	485.00 General	485.00	597.81
	Village Voices		3,127.38
		<u>7,464.48</u>	<u>3,725.19</u>
			<u>7,464.48</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 2009.

A.G.A. Williams
Chartered Accountant

23 September 2009

Social Committee

Penny Feathers, Hon Secretary

Members of the committee continue to provide welcoming drinks before talks and this year supported the superb *Village Voices* exhibition by organising refreshments at the official opening as well as providing light refreshments throughout the days visitors coming to Pearson Hall.

Our major event was the Heritage Trail on Sunday 31 May. Committee members had devised the questionnaire and map and more than 30 people enjoyed testing their knowledge of Sonning and Sonning Eye before returning to Beech Lodge for a well earned traditional English tea on a beautiful sunny afternoon. Next year, we are planning another of the popular Summer lunches so watch *Bridge* and make a date in your diary to join us.

As always, thanks go to committee members Carole Barnett, Joyce Reed, John Russell and John Sandall for all their support and hard work. Thanks also go to everyone who helps in any way. It makes such a difference and is greatly appreciated by us all.



Social Committee members enjoyed meeting a group of Chinese visitors to Sonning, who spent time in the "Village Voices" exhibition and had great fun trying on hats.

Planning & Environment

Brian O'Callaghan, Vice-Chairman & Co-ordinator of Panel

Since the last AGM the Planning and Environment Panel continued to monitor applications for alteration and development in the two villages. There were a number of applications of interest, in particular a number of modifications to existing buildings with the aim of make them more suitable for modern living. These were usually satisfactorily resolved. As the year progressed it became increasingly evident that many of our comments on development proposals also impacted on issues related to traffic. For example access to sites or applications that might generate additional traffic movements. Two joint meetings were held with the Traffic and Transport Panel, and in the end it was agreed that it would be more effective to merge the two.

Within Sonning and Sonning Eye, and on the approach roads to both, our eyes are assaulted by a clutter of traffic signage, which can be difficult to comprehend. The new Planning & Traffic Panel has surveyed the signs, and raised awareness of the issues with local councils. (Courtesy: John Argent)



Education Panel

Diana Coulter, Co-ordinator

The composition of the Panel remained small. It met very occasionally and would happily welcome additional contributors. It is grateful for all ideas brought to its attention. Currently we are Lesley Green, Joyce Reed and Diana Coulter.

Our achievements include a talk confirming the Saxon origins of the skeletons unearthed at The Bull in 2001, and a poignant reminder about our historic Fire Brigade. We experimented with two visits further afield (see overleaf), to Mapledurham Mill in October 2008, and to the London Wetland Centre in May 2009, envisioning what Sonning Eye might one day look like.

Bob Hine's report considers the outstanding exhibition put on by the *Village Voices* team during the Heritage Open Days Weekend, which the Panel supported. The following articles appeared in *Bridge*: the 1841 Sonning Cutting disaster, the renovation of the Almshouse Sheds, Windows Part II, and Gertrude Jekyll's work at Deanery Garden. Last, but not least, *Bridge* went colour this year. Many thanks too to Gary Robinson for bringing the website back into currency.

Traffic & Transport

Ken Henderson, Chairman of Panel

For the Traffic & Transport Panel, the most important event has undoubtedly been the work and conclusions of Reading's Independent Traffic Commission and the Council's efforts to obtain £300 million of the Transport Innovation Fund to make the conclusions a reality.

The agreement and co-operation of several local councils including Wokingham and Oxford is needed. A key government condition has been the inclusion of a form of 'Demand Management', such as Congestion Charging. Agreement on this point is proving difficult and time is running out. Wokingham's support is essential, Oxfordshire County Council is believed to be on-side, while South Oxfordshire is problematical. The final phase in the Reading proposal is the 'Third Bridge' with a date of 2019. The dire economic situation, plus the expense of the Olympics not to mention cut-backs by a new government, are casting doubt on that part of the project which is of greatest interest to Sonning.

Meanwhile thanks are due to the past service and support from Clare Chatfield, Jane Gascoine, John Hicks, Sally Hughes, Lynette Padfield, Alvin Rakoff, Eileen Richards, Stan Robinson and John Scivyer.

Planning & Traffic

Gary Robinson, Chairman

The Planning and Environment and Traffic and Transport Panels were merged during the summer, in recognition of the frequent overlap of the two Panels' activities. The new Joint Planning and Traffic Panel, of which I am chairman, includes many members of the original panels and several new members who have brought additional expertise.

The Joint Panel has continued to build on the excellent work of its predecessors. It has commented on several planning applications, for example supporting Wokingham Borough Council in obtaining Grade II listed status on a historically interesting building, located outside the Conservation Area. Traffic interests have been broadened to include innovative ways of managing traffic within our villages, whilst simultaneously reducing the visual clutter caused by signs. The results of an initial study were presented to the Sonning and Eye & Dunsden Parish Councils, who reacted extremely favourably, so much so that the Panel has been invited to work with both on traffic issues.