

Minutes of 6th AGM, Pearson Hall, 21 November 2009

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Bob Hine welcomed everyone present and said how good it was to have both the Society's President and Vice President with us.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mr and Mrs Keith Nichols, Mr and Mrs Patrick Hamblin, Mr and Mrs Hugh Digby, Mr and Mrs A Russell and Mr and Mrs B Arrowsmith.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the previous AGM had been distributed and were proposed by Gordon Barnett, seconded by Jane Gascoine, unanimously agreed and signed.

4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's Report. Bob Hine said he would be brief as his full report was contained in the Annual Report. It had been an exciting year and he thanked everyone involved with driving the Society forward, including the 'backroom people' who had supported the various events. Penny Feathers had completed her five-year term as Honorary Secretary, but had agreed to be co-opted onto the Executive Committee following the AGM. In September, over the Heritage Open Days Weekend, there had been a wonderful 'Village Voices' exhibition in Pearson Hall, which had given great pleasure to many. Although it had been a tremendous team effort, it was Mary Chapman's baby and he was delighted to present her with a gift of thanks. (Mary again stressed that the exhibition was the result of a team effort and she had received enormous support). The Chairman continued by thanking everyone involved with the project, including Jeremy Gilmore for the major part he played with IT, and Steve Chapman for sleeping in the hall to protect the equipment kept there during the weekend.

b) Planning & Traffic Report. Gary Robinson said his arm had been twisted to take on the role of Chairman of the new joint panel and thanked Brian O'Callaghan and Ken Henderson for their hard work as previous chairmen. He drew people's attention to the photographs of street signs on page three of the Annual Report and asked if so many were needed. There was a resounding "no" from many present. He continued that John Argent had given a presentation on this subject to both SPC and E&DPC. As a result, the Society had been invited to work with SPC's Highways Group.

c) Education Report. Diana Coulter said her written report covered the work of the panel, but she would like to confirm that the 'Village Voices' exhibition would be moving to MERL from the 9 January until April 2010. There would be two special afternoons for Society members on 19 February and 20 March. This would give an opportunity to see it to those who missed it in September as well as offering the chance of a second visit to others. Details would be available in the next edition of *Bridge*.

d) Social Committee. Penny Feathers said her written report gave details of the Committee's work during the year, so she would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who had helped with events in any way, including those who helped to set up the venues, cook and act as hosts, not forgetting Gordon Barnett who had printed tickets and menus for the AGM.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness said that it would be seen from his written report that the 'Village Voices' exhibition had dominated the accounts during the past year, and asked if there were any questions. As there were none, John Woodhouse proposed and Sharon Robinson seconded their acceptance, which was unanimously agreed.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Bob Hine thanked Allan Williams for agreeing to continue as Independent Examiner. His appointment was proposed by Lynn Woodhouse, seconded by Gordon Barnett and unanimously agreed.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

At this point, the Society's President John Edmonds, took over the proceedings and said there were four nominations for election as the Society's officers. These were Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Wendy Williams, seconded by Malcolm Stansfield; Vice Chairman: Dr. Brian O'Callaghan, proposed by John Edmonds, seconded by Penny Feathers; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Alan Furness, seconded by Linda Peters and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Ken Peters, seconded by Penny Feathers. It was proposed by Carole Barnett, seconded by Michael Hart and agreed unanimously that the above be elected en bloc.

8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The nominations were: Carole Barnett, proposed by Colin McCulloch, seconded by Brian Brooker; Diana Coulter, proposed by Peter van Went, seconded by Caroline Rimell; Mark Green, proposed by Lesley Green, seconded by Penny Feathers; Michael Hart, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Penny Feathers; Dr. Gary Robinson, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Penny Feathers and Dr. Annabella Marks, proposed by Jane Bowen, seconded by Jane Gascoine. These were proposed by David Bates, seconded by Colin McCulloch and unanimously elected en bloc.

9. AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

As required, notice of the proposed change to the constitution had been given to the membership and endorsed by the Executive Committee 28 days prior to the AGM. It was proposed that the amendment would read as follows: "The Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall normally be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting of the Society and may be re-elected to the same position for up to five years." Acceptance was proposed by Jeremy Gilmore, seconded by John Russell and more than 2/3 of those present agreed to adopt this amendment to the constitution. There were none against.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

President John Edmonds presented Penny Feathers with a gift of thanks for her time as Honorary Secretary and said that the Executive were pleased that she would continue in her role as leader of the Social Committee.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.



2009/2010

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2009/2010

Executive Committee Report

Bob Hine, Chairman

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

The Executive held six meetings during the year which were all well attended.

The Society has had another active year. The *Village Voices* exhibition that was staged last year in the Pearson Hall was transferred to the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading from January to April 2010. This project continued to prove most worthwhile. It was good that it reached a wider audience and is a real credit to Mary Chapman and her small team. We look forward to the next development, which is

in the planning, to produce a record in book form.

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

The combined Planning and Traffic Panel which was formed last year, under the chairmanship of Gary Robinson,

has been most effective and proven to be a useful change. The Panel is now guided by *Planning Policy Statement No 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, which replaces former PPG15 (historic environment) and PPG16 (archaeology). The new guidance and the change of government in

May has introduced some new measures, which will require the Society to be vigilant as we go forward. In this respect there is little doubt that the Society can make a positive contribution to the 'Big Society'.

I'm also pleased to report that the Society website has been updated. The amount of information that can be viewed and is available for download is considerable. My thanks to Diana Coulter for all the cataloguing work of *Bridge*, the Society's newsletter and to Gary Robinson and Mark Green for the updating work involved.

Finally, my thanks to the Social Committee who have provided some excellent catering during the year and especially on the occasions of the AGM and also the Summer Luncheon held in the garden of Sonningdene. Penny Feathers and Carole Barnett continue to provide imaginative refreshment for the benefit of our members for which I thank them sincerely. The Society membership has continued to increase and currently stands at 226 and 3 corporate.



The Summer Luncheon at Sonningdene - once the wind died down, a perfect summer's day.



Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2010

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

As with last year's report, the General Fund is analysed between the *Village Voices* project and Other Activities.

The *Village Voices* project received income of £2,502.50 during the year, and expenses amounted to £4,409.28. Major expenses were banner stands/panels, £1,147.70, DVD production costs, £645.03, and the hire of Pearson Hall, £400.00. Although for this financial year the project made a loss of £1,906.78, it ended the financial year with a credit balance of £1,653.54.

As regards Other Activities, our membership subscriptions, £1,125.00, were 4% below last year but we will benefit

next year by many new members joining during the recent Village Show. The overall net income of £1,593.70 is offset by the cost of producing our quarterly newsletter, £742.18; Heritage Open Days weekend expenses, £212.06; five-year website subscription, £201.25; a new notice board, £162.79; subscriptions to other organisations paid, £356.75; general expenses, £302.57; and insurance premium, £265.77. The excess of expenditure over income for the current year for other activities is £649.67 which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward shows a credit balance carried forward, £2,549.07.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2010

		£
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2009		
General	3,198.74	
Village Voices	<u>3,560.32</u>	
		6,759.06
EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME FOR THE YEAR		
General	(649.67)	
Village Voices	<u>(1,906.78)</u>	
		(2,556.45)
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2010		
General	2,549.07	
Village Voices	<u>1,653.54</u>	
		<u>4,202.61</u>

GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:

CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	3,800.00
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	265.61
CASH IN HAND	30.00
WINE & SOFT DRINKS STOCK	107.00
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2010	<u>4,202.61</u>

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2009 TO 31ST AUGUST 2010

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
	£		£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,125.00	NEWSLETTER	742.18
AGM	1,023.50	AGM	900.95
SUMMER LUNCH	935.00	SUMMER LUNCH	608.80
BIX BLUEBELLS VISIT	14.00	BIX BLUEBELLS VISIT	20.00
SONNING BELLS	8.00	HERITAGE OPEN DAYS	212.06
DONATIONS	5.00	WEBSITE SUBSCRIPTION	201.25
WOODYER BOOKLETS	2.50	NEW NOTICE BOARD	162.79
BANK INTEREST	10.45	SUBSCRIPTIONS	356.75
		GENERAL EXPENSES	302.57
		LIABILITY INSURANCE	265.77
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:		VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE	4,409.28
SALES OF PHOTOS/DVDs/BOOKS	2,292.00		
DONATIONS	210.50	EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME FOR THE YEAR	
		General	(649.67)
		Village Voices	<u>(1,906.78)</u>
	<u>5,625.95</u>		<u>(2,556.45)</u>
			<u>5,625.95</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 2010.

Sonning:
5th October 2010

A.G.A. Williams
Chartered Accountant

Planning & Traffic

Gary Robinson, Chairman of Panel

The Joint Planning and Traffic Panel has continued the excellent work of its predecessors over the past year, with a number of planning applications coming in that have had potential impacts on highways issues. Although much of its business was conducted by telephone or e-mails, the Panel met several times to discuss more complex planning applications.

As we reported in the Autumn issue of *Bridge*, several Panel members attended the public exhibition in July organised by Lafarge Ltd on their plans to extend the gravel extraction area to the east of Sonning Eye, and the Society will be keeping a close on future developments. We also welcomed the appointment of a new Urban Design and Conservation Officer at Wokingham Borough Council.

A major activity of the Panel has been a constructive collabora-

tion with the Highways Working Group of Sonning Parish Council to develop a strategy for managing the traffic flow within Sonning, and by extension, Sonning Eye. The group provided an interesting presentation to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May, and has since found the initiative to be challenging, especially in trying to persuade Wokingham Council and other interested parties of the benefits to villagers of modifying traffic patterns with minimal changes (and financial outlay). This initiative is now all the more important with the likely loss of funding for the Third Bridge. As part of this activity we are currently developing a methodology to identify and report unnecessary signs around the villages.

The Panel's members are: Gary Robinson, John Argent, Judith Cassingham, Alastair Driver, John Edmonds, Mike Hart, Maureen Meer, Brian O'Callaghan and Allan Williams.



Education Panel

Diana Coulter, Co-ordinator

The composition of the Panel was unchanged: Lesley Green, Joyce Reed and me. Our commitments have meant we have hardly met and would seriously welcome input from others. As ever we are grateful for all ideas brought to our attention for either events or articles in *Bridge*.

We deliberately kept competing attractions to a minimum during the winter and spring as we wanted to ensure that *Village Voices* received maximum support during its showing at MERL. It was daunting having to 'pull' two events during the year - one in the autumn, admittedly due to the weather (helping to clean up All's Pond), the other, an impromptu talk by the bell-ringers, because low numbers did not make the event viable (the talk on the church bells is now planned for March 2011). We nearly pulled the Bix bluebell walk in April too, but for the handful who attended, it was an informative and memorable afternoon.

The following articles appeared in *Bridge*: a review of the *Village Voices* exhibition, Peter van Went's history of the Blue Coat School, Alvin Rakoff's moving reminiscence of Terence Rattigan, and some thoughts on the 'breathing house'. Our Page 3 always welcomes contributions from anyone who wishes to celebrate or enhance our understanding of the wonderful place where we live, so do get in touch.

Social Committee

Penny Feathers, Co-ordinator

As always, members of the Social Committee have been active during the year providing enjoyable events for members and their friends.

On Sunday 20 June there was once again a Summer Lunch. This time thanks to the generosity of Ann and Tom Mills, it was held in the lovely gardens of Sonningdene. Pearson Hall was also booked for food preparation and as a stand-by in case of inclement weather. However, the sun shone and a large number of members enjoyed the lunch and were able to talk to Ben Viljoen, the Vice Chairman of the Berkshire Gardens Trust, who came with an exhibition to illustrate their important work.

On Sunday 12 September, as part of the Society's contribution to the national Heritage Open Days Weekend, committee members revised the previous year's Heritage Trail and rewarded with a cream tea wishing to test their knowledge of Sonning and Sonning Eye by taking a walk and trying to answer the questions. As always the walk was free, but a charge was made for tea to help cover the cost of the event.

Earlier in the year we were pleased to welcome Gordon Owen as a member of the committee. Thanks go to him, Carole Barnett, Joyce Reed, John Russell and John Sandall for all their support and hard work. Also to Jim Reed and Gordon Barnett who so often lend a hand 'on the day'. It's greatly appreciated.