

# Minutes of 8th AGM, Pearson Hall, 26 November 2011

1. **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME:** Bob Hine extended a warm welcome to the 80 members present.

2. **APOLOGIES:** Apologies had been received from Mr & Mrs McCulloch, Mr & Mrs Heaney and Mr & Mrs Driver.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 20 November 2010, having previously been distributed, were unanimously agreed to be an accurate record on the proposal of Nick Siney, seconded by Bart Guthrie.

## 4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

### a) Chairman's Report

Bob Hine said that he had little to add to his report in the previously distributed Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2010/2011. He thanked the retiring Executive Committee members for their hard work, particularly the Vice Chairman, Brian O'Callaghan, and Diana Coulter, the Co-ordinator of the Education Panel. Both had completed seven years on the Executive Committee and, in accordance with the Society's Constitution, were standing down. Bob Hine said that the Society had benefited greatly from Diana's ability to come up with interesting topics for talks and walks and had worked extremely hard to ensure the success of the Society's newsletter, *Bridge*, and many other publications and events.

### b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report

In Colin McCulloch's absence, Bob Hine told the meeting that the Society had recently embarked on the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal, in partnership with the Parish Council. He said that this was an important project, which would address many key issues and bring influence to bear on future planning. Volunteers were required for data collection and analysis. He said that if anyone was interested in discovering what being involved might mean, they should contact him or Colin McCulloch.

Bob Hine then spoke of the work of the Parish Council's Highways Working Group, on which the Society was represented. He said that a meeting of residents was to be held on either 24 or 31 January 2012, at which the Working Group's strategy for reducing the impact of traffic in the village would be explained and discussed. The meeting date would be confirmed in the Parish Council's newsletter, which was to be published within the next few weeks.

### c) Education Panel Report

Diana Coulter drew the meeting's attention to her report, which was contained in the Annual Report & Accounts 2010/11. She said that she was most grateful to all those who had supported the various events that had been held throughout the year. Particular mention was made of the members who braved the cold of a night in March to listen to an excellent talk on the history of Sonning's bells. The success of that talk had prompted the Executive Committee to invite the restarted Sonning Handbell Ringers to provide the after-supper entertainment. Diana Coulter concluded her report by saying that, all in all, it had been a good year, which warranted a 'silver' star, if not a gold one.

### d) Social Committee

Penny Feathers said that her written report gave details of the Social Committee's work during the year. She said that she had been pleased to welcome two new members to the Committee, namely Sally Andreou and Catherine Penny. It had also been great fun working with Annabella Marks to plan and execute the menu for this year's supper. She thanked everyone for all their hard work in staging the evening, particularly the table hostesses and John Russell for organising the bar. This was to be the last time that he would be running the bar as he had decided that now was the time to step back.

## 5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness said that the financial report for the year to 31 August 2011 was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts 2010/11. He drew the meeting's attention to the donations from the Fire Brigade Trust and the Parish Council for the Conservation Area Appraisal and said that this money had been 'ring-fenced'. No expenditure had been incurred so far but expenses would need to be met in the next financial year. Bob Hine thanked Alan Furness for keeping the Society's finances on the straight and narrow. He said that in one year's time Alan Furness would have to stand down from the Executive Committee having completed the maximum term of office of five years. A new Treasurer would be required and he suggested that members might like to think about whom that might be.

## 6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Bob Hine said that Allan Williams had for many years undertaken the role of Independent Examiner. The Society was most grateful for all that he had done and for what he will continue to do in this role.

## 7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Society's President, John Edmonds, took over the proceedings at this point. He said that Bob Hine was an excellent Chairman, who had led the Executive Committee most effectively. He told the meeting that there were four nominations for election as the Society's officers. These were: Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Keith Nichols, seconded by Terry Hunt; Vice Chairman: Mike Hart, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by John Russell; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Heather Hine, seconded by Alan Furness and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Andy Bell, seconded by Linda Peters. It was proposed by John Russell and seconded by Lesley Runnalls and agreed unanimously that the aforementioned be elected *en bloc*.

## 8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Edmonds said that there were five nominations for election to the Executive Committee. These were: Penny Feathers, proposed by Joan Pierce, seconded by Allan Williams; Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Caroline Gilmore; Lesley Heaney, proposed by Joan Hughes, seconded by Alan Potter; Colin McCulloch, proposed by Catharina McCulloch, seconded by Andy Bell, and Pauline Simmonds, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Andy Bell. It was proposed by John Woodhouse and seconded by Judy Baldwin and agreed unanimously that the aforementioned be elected *en bloc*.

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Bob Hine took over the Chair. He thanked John Edmonds for his kind comments and for handling the election so expertly. Bob Hine then invited the meeting to raise any other items of business, of which there were none.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.



# 2011/2012

## Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2011/2012

# Executive Committee Report

### Bob Hine, Chairman

The Committee's present members are: Bob Hine (Chairman), Mike Hart (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Penny Feathers, Jeremy Gilmore, Lesley Heaney, Annabella Marks\* and Pauline Simmonds (\* co-opted).

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

It has been an exciting and especially busy year for the Society.

Pauline Simmonds agreed to take on the role of Press Officer which has enabled the continuation of informative articles published in the Parish Magazine.

In August Colin McCulloch resigned from the Executive and as a result stood down from chairing the Planning and Traffic Panel.

Colin's commitment towards the aims of the Society was considerable and I thank him for his contribution since joining the Executive in 2010. Vice Chairman, Mike Hart ensured that the Society maintained continuity with this important panel and agreed to chair it for which I also thank him.

We are most grateful to Gary Robinson who updated the

Society website until recently when for health reasons he could not continue. We thank Gary for his contribution and wish him well in his return to good health. I am very pleased to report that Jeremy Gilmore has taken on responsibility for the website and we are benefiting greatly from his professional expertise.

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

The small *Village Voices* team has continued with their unstinting work in preparing for publication the book which we reported on last year. We look forward with great interest to the opportunity for launching the book at this year's Annual General Meeting.

Finally, my thanks to Diana Coulter for master

mind the photographic competition and for all her hard work editing *Bridge*. I am sure we are the envy of many a civic society of our size in the high quality of our Society newsletter.

The Society membership currently stands at 215 (87 double, 38 single, 1 family) and 3 corporate members.



The overall winner of the Society's Jubilee Photo Competition, "Mid winter in Sonning - snow and clear skies signal the cold" by Jean-Jacques Vizern



# Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2012

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

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

The *Village Voices* project has seen little activity during the year. A payment of £200 was made as part of the cost of publishing the book and there were also minor receipts and payments.

The donations we received from The Fire Brigade Trust

and Sonning Parish Council last year were repaid as there was a change in how the Conservation Project was to be managed and the Parish Council took it under its wing.

As regards Other Activities, The excess of income over expenditure for other activities is £672.42 as analysed in the Financial Statement below, which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward, shows a credit balance carried forward of £3,820.18.

## SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

### GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2012

|   | £                 |                 |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2011                         |                   |                 |
| General   | 3,147.76          |                 |
| Village Voices  | 1,611.43          |                 |
| Conservation Project                                  | <u>1,500.00</u>   |                 |
|   |                   | 6,259.19        |
| EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR |                   |                 |
| General   | 672.42            |                 |
| Village Voices  | (192.62)          |                 |
| Conservation Project                                  | <u>(1,500.00)</u> |                 |
|   |                   | (1,020.20)      |
| BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2012                           |                   |                 |
| General   | 3,820.18          |                 |
| Village Voices  | 1,418.81          |                 |
| Conservation Project                                  | <u>0.00</u>       |                 |
|   |                   | <u>5,238.99</u> |

### GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT | 5,100.00        |
| CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT | 114.59          |
| WINE & SOFT DRINKS STOCK       | <u>24.40</u>    |
| BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2012    | <u>5,238.99</u> |

### INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2011 TO 31ST AUGUST 2012

| INCOME                     | £               | EXPENDITURE   | £                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS      | 1,104.00        | NEWSLETTER  | 466.25            |
| AGM                        | 1,177.00        | AGM   | 886.31            |
| EXPLORING DUNSDEN          | 196.00          | EXPLORING DUNSDEN                                     | 49.50             |
| WOODLEY WALK               | 137.00          | WOODLEY WALK  | 83.99             |
| DONATIONS                  | 42.00           | SUBSCRIPTIONS   | 82.00             |
| BANK INTEREST              | 2.23            | GENERAL EXPENSES                                      | 148.80            |
|                            |                 | LIABILITY INSURANCE                                   | 268.96            |
|                            |                 | CONSERVATION PROJECT                                  | 1,500.00          |
| VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:     |                 | VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE                            |                   |
| Sales of Photos/DVDs/Books | 32.60           | Miscellaneous   | 225.22            |
|                            |                 | EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR |                   |
|                            |                 | General   | 672.42            |
|                            |                 | Village Voices  | (192.62)          |
|                            |                 | Conservation Project                                  | <u>(1,500.00)</u> |
|                            |                 |   | (1,020.20)        |
|                            | <u>2,690.83</u> |   | <u>2,690.83</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 2012.

Sonning:  
17th October 2012

A.G.A. Williams  
Chartered Accountant

# Planning & Traffic Panel

Mike Hart, Chairman of Panel

I took over from Colin McCulloch as Chairman of the Panel in August. The panel was reconstituted and its members are now Andy Bell (Secretary); John Argent; David Bates; Brian O'Callaghan; John Edmonds (ex-officio) and Bob Hine (ex-officio). Consultants are Ali Driver (Environment); Maureen Meer (Legal) and Allan Williams (South of A4). No member has yet been found to represent Sonning Eye – a representative is needed and we would welcome a volunteer.

Panel meetings now take place monthly in the Sonning Club. The dates are on the Society's website and the meetings are open to any member who wishes to attend. A roster of panel members is in place for attendance at Sonning Parish Council (SPC) Planning Committee meetings in order that our panel can coordinate its activities with SPC.

The panel receives copies of the weekly lists of planning applications and decisions for Sonning & Sonning Eye published by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and South Oxfordshire County Council respectively. Panel members are circulated with relevant extracts and they are discussed at the monthly meetings or earlier if more urgent. Representations are made to the respective planning authority on issues that are seen to be significant. In the past year representations have been made in respect of:

- The park and ride facility at Reading Rugby Club (Adwest Ground) near Sonning Meadows. Despite the efforts of both S&SES and SPC, WBC approved the application.
- Redevelopment of the former Sonning Fire Station site. An application has been submitted to convert the existing fire

station into a 3 bedroom house and to build a 4 bedroom house next to it. Although this is a great improvement on the previous proposal it is still excessively large for the plot size and the panel has submitted an objection to WBC.

- Demolition of August Field and replacement with 5 barn-type units. This application was refused by WBC but is now the subject of an appeal by the developer. A panel member attended the informal hearing that took place on 30 October and made representations that the proposals were inappropriate for the location within the Conservation Area.
- Gravel extraction in Sonning Eye. The panel has supported Sonning Eye residents in their petitions to limit the proposed expansions of gravel extraction.

The panel has also been actively supporting SPC in the drafting of a new Conservation Area Appraisal. The first draft of this document is well advanced and plans are in hand for it to be discussed with residents at an exhibition in Pearson Hall early in 2013. Once comments have been received and incorporated, the Appraisal will be formally submitted to WBC and will be an important reference document for comments on future planning applications in the Conservation Area.

Monitoring of overweight vehicles crossing Sonning Bridge has resulted in some prosecutions. A weak bridge minimum weight restriction is expected to be imposed shortly which should also help in this respect. Traffic through the village continues to be a huge problem and the panel will be considering what actions it can take to mitigate the problems of volume and speed of through traffic.

# Education & Social Panel

Penny Feathers, Co-ordinator

I am writing this report at the end of what has been a more than usually busy and exciting year in the life of our villages as residents joined together to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the bi-annual Regatta and Scarecrow trail. For this reason we did not hold a separate social event during the summer, but as a Society contributed two scarecrows which were displayed in the garden of our President over the Jubilee weekend. We also organised two very successful walks and talks in addition to a photographic competition to record a year in life of our villages.

On the first May Bank Holiday our Spring walk and talk started at Eye & Dunsden Village Hall where Nick Marks gave us a fascinating insight into the planning and planting of the Community Orchard, explaining the rationale and history behind it and the choice of the varieties used, before we walked through the orchard en route to the All Saints Church where WW1 poet Wilfred Owen was Lay Assistant. We were fortunate enough to be given a talk by the current church warden before returning across the fields to the village hall for a home-made tea and an enlightening talk about the poet by Jean Eastwood.

In the early Autumn we accepted the suggestion of one

of our society members to visit the Maiden Erlegh nature reserve, starting with an excellent talk about the history and work at the site by Senior Ranger, Grahame Hawker. This was followed by a guided walk around the lake before ending up in Mary Blustin's welcoming home for tea.

Once again we had a stall at the Village Show and thanks to all who manned it, recruited new members and were able to publicise forthcoming events.

The photo competition, which thanks to Diana Coulter, Jeremy Gilmore and all who contributed, including the judges, children at the Primary School and on-line voters culminated in the choice of 24 photographs which were displayed at the Village Show and the following day in the St. Sarik Room where teas were served to complement the Heritage Walks.

Thanks go to all the members of the Education and Social Panel who made these events possible. Currently the panel comprises Lesley Green, Patrick Hamblin, Annabella Marks, Gordon Owen, Catherine Penny, Joyce Reed, Pauline Simmonds, Diana Coulter and John Sandall. Without them and the help of other Society members we would be unable to organise such an interesting program,