

Minutes of 10th AGM, Pearson Hall, 23 November 2013

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Bob Hine extended a warm welcome to everyone present and said that it was good to have a full house for the Society's 10th Annual General Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES: Apologies had been received from Ali and Belinda Driver only.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Bob Hine said that the minutes of the 9th Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 24 November 2012, were set out in the previously distributed Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2012/2013. He drew the meeting's attention to the first line of the minutes which erroneously stated that the meeting had been held in the Pearson Hall when, in fact, it had been held in the Sonning Club due to a power outage in the hall. Subject to this amendment, the minutes were unanimously agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting on the proposal of Pauline Simmonds, seconded by Colin Pierce.

4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's Report

Bob Hine told the meeting that it had been another interesting and busy year for the Society. He said that the Village Voices book, which had been launched at the 2012 Annual General Meeting, had been a great success. The team that had prepared the book was thanked, as was Pauline Simmonds who had worked hard promoting it. Bob Hine then went on to thank Penny Feathers for all that she had done for the Society over the past nine years, firstly as Honorary Secretary and more recently as Coordinator of the Education and Social Panel. He said that she was now stepping down from the Executive Committee, although he was pleased to report that she had agreed to continue to support the Education and Social Panel with its programme of events and ticket sales. Finally, Bob Hine thanked the Executive Committee for giving him such great support during his five years as Chairman. He invited questions from the floor but there were none.

b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Mike Hart said that the Planning & Traffic Panel had met regularly during the year to review planning applications and make representations to the planning authorities on issues that were considered to be significant. He said that despite representations from the Society and Sonning Parish Council (SPC) two notable applications had been approved. These were for the redevelopment of the former Fire Station site and the demolition of August Field and its replacement with three units in a barn-type building parallel to Charvil Lane and a detached house set at right angles. Mike Hart added that the Panel had maintained a good relationship with SPC and had actively supported the Council in drafting the new Conservation Area Assessment. The first draft had been showcased at a public exhibition in February 2013 and a final draft was expected by the year-end. Questions were again invited from the floor but there were none.

c) Education & Social Panel Report

Penny Feathers said that there had been several well-supported and interesting events during the year. She mentioned, in particular, the Society's visit to Lord McAlpine's Museum and Railway at his estate in Fawley Hill, near Henley. It was, she said, an excellent day out, despite the rain. She added that the Panel might do something similar in the future. Penny Feathers went on to thank all the members of the Panel for their hard work and said that after nine years service she would miss being on the Executive Committee. She thanked Pauline Simmonds for agreeing to takeover the leadership of the Panel and wished her every success in her new role.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness said that the financial report for the year to 31 August 2013 was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2012/13. He drew the meeting's attention to the success of the Village Voices book and commented on the excellent job that Pauline Simmonds had done in promoting it. Book sales had now reached 332 copies, which, he said, was a magnificent result. Questions were invited from the floor but there were none.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Bob Hine said that the Society was most fortunate to have Allan Williams as its Independent Examiner. This was a role that he had undertaken for many years. He was willing to continue and Bob Hine thanked him for offering to do so.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

John Edmonds took over the Chair. He said that Bob Hine had completed his time as Chairman, a role that he had performed very well. He had shown great skill and energy and fully deserved the Society's thanks. John Edmonds went on to say that there were four nominations for election as the Society's officers. These were: Chairman: Mike Hart, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Andy Bell; Vice Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Mike Hart, seconded by Andy Bell; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Alan Furness, seconded by Linda Peters and Honorary Treasurer: Alan Furness, proposed by Andy Bell, seconded by Linda Peters. It was proposed by Lyn Woodhouse and seconded by Peter van Went 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: Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Brian Brooker, seconded by Pat Doyle; Patrick Hamblin, proposed by Mike Hart, seconded by Andy Bell; Lesley Heaney, proposed by Ann Brown, seconded by Alan Potter; Annabella Marks, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Patrick Hamblin and Pauline Simmonds, proposed by Penny Feathers, seconded by Pauline Farrant. It was proposed by Mark Green and seconded by Diana Coulter and agreed unanimously that the aforementioned be elected en bloc.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mike Hart took over the Chair. After thanking Bob Hine for his leadership over the past five years, he invited the meeting to raise any other items of business, of which there were none. Bob Hine then addressed the meeting. He thanked everyone for all their kind words and said that the last five years as Chairman had really broadened his horizons. Bob Hine went on to say that the real point of him addressing the meeting again was to recognise the excellent work that Penny Feathers had done for the Society since its foundation in 2004. He said that the Society wished to mark the occasion with a gift, which was being given to Penny Feathers with the Society's love and thanks for all that she had done over the past nine years. The meeting warmly applauded Penny Feathers, who accepted the gift of garden vouchers, which she said would be put to very good use.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.



2013/2014

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2013/2014

Executive Committee Report

Mike Hart, Chairman

The Executive Committee members of the Society in 2013/2014 have been: Mike Hart (Chairman), Bob Hine (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Alan Furness (Hon. Treasurer), Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin (Chairman of Planning & Traffic Panel), Lesley Heaney (Membership Secretary), Annabella Marks and Pauline Simmonds (Coordinator, Education and Social Panel). John Edmonds continues in his important role as President of the Society.

This year has been the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Society and we produced a special edition of *Bridge* to mark that occasion. Our AGM dinner concludes our anniversary celebrations. We had hoped to have our Vice-President and first Chairman, Chris Clarke and his wife, as our guests; we are delighted that Theresa May will be with us again, and are grateful to Lynette Padfield and her son for entertaining us.

Your committee met six times during the year with good attendances. We are so lucky to have a committee comprising enthusiastic volunteers who take pride in belonging to the thriving communities of Sonning and Sonning Eye. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to them

for giving up their free time in support of the Society. We are always on the look-out for new volunteers and we look forward to new committee members joining us next year.

There are a few aspects of the Society's work that I would particularly like to mention. Firstly our relationship with Sonning Parish Council has greatly improved over the year



In the year in which countrywide the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War is commemorated, Penny Feathers realised 'War Horse' with help from Pauline Simmonds in the 2014 Sonning Scarecrows event.

and I believe that this is as it should be. Our aims are mainly aligned although we start from a different base. We now regularly attend SPC meetings and are pleased to welcome Trefor Fisher as an observer from SPC at our regular committee meetings.

Secondly our programme of talks and walks has proved to be very popular and I think this admirably fulfils one of the Society's objectives, that of education about our history and environment. If any members would like to suggest an interesting topic on which we could

arrange a talk, we would love to hear from you.

Finally I would like to thank you, our members, for supporting us and encourage you to continue to participate in our various activities. Further details of the Society's activities are given in the following pages.

Society Membership

Lesley Heaney, Membership Secretary

The Society's membership stands at 210, which is made up as follows:

- 3 Corporate
- 176 Double
- 31 Single

15 members did not renew this year but the Society has managed to recruit 13 new members, whom we welcome most warmly. Please let me know of any newcomers to the two villages. I will then deliver a welcome brochure to them.

The Mill Theatre hosted our inaugural meeting in September 2014, when Jane Balfour talked about Jekyll's gardens. Here conversion is in progress in 1970, an event we celebrated during our 2007 Heritage Open Days Weekend. (Courtesy: N Weston)



Financial Report for year as at 31 August 2014

Alan Furness, Honorary Treasurer

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

Sales of The Village Voices book continue with sales during the last year amounting to 39 copies. By the date of this report total income from book sales was £3,194.90 and 354 books had been sold.

As regards Other Activities, The excess of income over expenditure for other activities is £404.19 as analysed in the Financial Statement below, which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward, shows a credit balance carried forward £3,893.11.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2014

	£	
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013		
General	3,488.92	
Village Voices	<u>2,402.85</u>	
		5,891.77
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR		
General	404.19	
Village Voices	<u>355.20</u>	
		759.39
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2014		
General	3,893.11	
Village Voices	<u>2,758.05</u>	
		<u>6,651.16</u>
GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:		
CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	6,500.00	
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	151.16	
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2014	<u>6,651.16</u>	

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013 TO 31ST AUGUST 2014

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,097.00	NEWSLETTER	450.75
AGM	1,518.00	AGM	1,347.10
HERITAGE OPEN DAY	0.00	HERITAGE OPEN DAY	24.00
RED KITES	234.00	RED KITES	106.23
JANE AUSTEN	230.00	JANE AUSTEN	82.95
CLIMATE CHANGE	181.00	CLIMATE CHANGE	72.94
BANK INTEREST	2.47	SUBSCRIPTIONS	209.00
		GENERAL EXPENSES	292.41
		LIABILITY INSURANCE	272.90
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:		VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE:	
VILLAGE VOICES BOOK SALES	358.20	Miscellaneous	3.00
		EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	
		General	404.19
		Village Voices	<u>355.20</u>
			759.39
	<u>3,620.67</u>		<u>3,620.67</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 2014.

Sonning:
16th October 2014

A.G.A. Williams
Chartered Accountant

Planning & Traffic Panel

Patrick Hamblin, Chairman

I took over from Mike Hart as Chairman of the Panel in November 2013. The members of the Panel are Andy Bell (Secretary), David Bates, John Edmonds (ex officio), Mike Hart, Bob Hine and Brian O'Callaghan, with additional assistance from Ali Driver (environmental advisor), Maureen Meer (legal advisor) and Allan Williams (south of A4 advisor). We are currently short of representation from Sonning Eye.

Panel meetings take place monthly in the Sonning Club. The dates are on the Society's website (www.sonning.org.uk) and the meetings are open to any member who wishes to attend. The Society is also represented by an observer at the meetings of the Sonning Parish Council (SPC) Planning Committee so that the views of the SPC can be considered by the Panel.

Weekly lists of planning applications for both Sonning (published by Wokingham Borough Council) and Sonning Eye (published by South Oxfordshire District Council) are received and circulated to Panel members for discussion at the monthly meetings or earlier if necessary. Representations are made to the respective planning authority on issues that are seen to be significant. In the past year representations have been made relating to various issues in respect of the following:

- Former Fire Station site – preservation of information on old air raid shelter
- St Andrew's Church hall
- Renovation of 'gates' in Sonning Lane
- Former Fire Station site – flags
- South Lodge, Sonning Lane
- Birchley, Old Bath Road.

The Society endeavoured to assist the Sonning Eye Action Group relating to infilling of gravel pits with inert waste by making representations to the National Planning Casework Unit

Representations were made to Reading University regarding the poor quality of the farm sign in Charvil Lane. The University subsequently agreed to renew the sign and an application has been made to Wokingham Borough Council.

The Society is pursuing the provision of cycle racks in Sonning. It was hoped to provide a rack, with assistance of funding from the Scarecrow Committee, adjacent to the Pearson Hall but this suggestion has not yet been accepted by the Pearson Hall Committee. Other locations are being considered.

The Panel attended a newly constituted working group with SPC Highways Working Group to discuss common issues. SPC subsequently decided not to continue with this group but the Society is continuing with its work with a view of submitting a report to SPC in due course.

Meetings were attended regarding the third Thames crossing.

The Panel has also been actively supporting the SPC in the completion of the draft of the Conservation Area Appraisal and particular thanks go to Diana Coulter and Brian O'Callaghan for their excellent work in this area. The document has now been passed to SPC for their review and for passing to Wokingham Borough Council. This will be an important reference document on future planning applications in the Conservation Area.

The Panel is hoping to continue its previous work with SPC of monitoring of overweight vehicles crossing Sonning Bridge although the problem appears to have improved this year.

Education & Social Panel

Pauline Simmonds, Coordinator

Sonning and Sonning Eye are only two small villages but they constantly provide a variety of connections to interesting people, places and national events.

2014 was no exception. In March we had a detailed talk by Joy Pibworth on Jane Austen. Jane's uncle was Vicar of St Andrew's Church and many of her relatives lived in the area.

In early May about a dozen members visited the Matthews Brickyards near Chesham and learnt a great deal about wood-burning kilns, old bricks and 'bonding'!

Professor Mike Lockwood from Reading University gave a presentation in June on 'Climate Change' and the River Thames. It was a highly complex subject and we were very fortunate to have such an expert here in the Pearson Hall. After all the floods in February, it was a very relevant topic.

Our Bank Holiday Scarecrow, in the meantime, entitled 'War Horse' by Penny Feathers, was ideal in this centenary year and our stand at the Village Show in September, attracted several new members. Diana Coulter and Brian



O'Callaghan organised the Heritage Walks on the same weekend and although they covered the same route as last year, they were well publicised and we welcomed over 60 visitors from around the area and beyond.

Hurst provided the 'highlights' in October as we investigated our historical connections, with the help of the Hurst Village Society and

its President, Annette Drake. Henry Farrar, who wrote the 'Book of Hurst', showed a fascinating film about the village's large estates and their important families. A guided tour of the Almshouses and St Nicholas Church followed, and one of England's oldest Bowls Clubs, near the Castle Inn, provided a welcomed cup of tea!

All the Panel members, Penny Feathers, Patrick Hamblin, Annabella Marks, Lesley Green, Joyce Reed and Diana Coulter have helped in various ways to plan these events, including our Anniversary Supper (this evening) and we're very grateful for their continued support. It has been a very busy but memorable 10th Year.