2018/2019

Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2018/2019

Executive Committee Report

Mike Hart, Chairman

The Society's Executive Committee members this year have been: Mike Hart (Chairman), Bob Hine (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Ali Driver, Joan Collins (Hon. Treasurer), Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin (Chairman of Planning & Traffic Panel), Lesley Heaney (Membership Secretary), Annabella Marks and Pauline Simmonds (Chairman of Education and Social Panel). Trefor Fisher has continued to play an active role as the Sonning Parish Council observer at committee meetings, further strengthening the links between the two organisations.

As reported at the last AGM our Treasurer, Alan Furness, decided to stand down having held this position for the past 11 years. Joan Collins agreed to take on the role and was appointed Honorary Treasurer in April 2019. Alan continued to oversee the 2018-2019 accounts and is available to answer any questions on them.

Under the Constitution, Patrick, Annabella and Ali need to stand down as they have completed 3 years' service but they are willing to remain as co-opted members of the Committee. Your outgoing committee is willing to stand for re-election.

Your committee met six times during the year with good attendance at every meeting. As described within, the Education & Social panel has arranged several talks, which have been extremely well attended. Our Planning & Traffic panel meets monthly in Sonning Club and has made many representations to Wokingham Borough Council both in favour and against planning applications.

We were pleased to see the improvements to the parking problems in Sonning Lane when Blue Coat School made an agreement with Berkshire Sports to use their car park. The no-parking restrictions along Sonning Lane were also improved but the yellow lines only lasted a short while before being obliterated by resurfacing! We understand that they will be repainted shortly with thinner lines. Many thanks to Jesse Elzinga for his persistence in getting the parking situation improved.

We were delighted that SPC has agreed to promote a Neighbourhood Plan for Sonning, the Society has been an advocate of this for some time and we look forward to its launch at a public meeting here in Pearson Hall on 18 February 2020.

Bridge continues to be published quarterly and Jeremy Gilmore has maintained a very high standard in all 10 issues since he took over. We are very grateful to him for all his efforts not only for Bridge but also for the updated Society web site.

Following commissioning of the improved audio system, courtesy of the Sonning Volunteer Fire Brigade Trust, a film club showing films monthly during the winter kicked off with performances in January, February and March. The season restarted again last month and will have showings up to March 2020. Many thanks to Rod Thomas for taking on the organisation.

We have increased our membership during the year. We welcome our new members and thank them and our regulars for their interest and involvement in the Society's activities this year, details of which are given in the following pages.

I would like to thank the volunteers who help Pauline with the organisation and running of social and educational events and those who distribute copies of Bridge to our members. Their willing assistance is invaluable.

We welcome members and guests to the forthcoming dinner. Pauline, Annabella and Lyn Woodhouse planned the menu, bought the ingredients, divvied them up and arranged delivery for cooking by your table hosts. We hope you enjoy the results!

Financial Report for year ending 31 August 2019

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 income during the last year amounting to £38.50 for 4 copies sold. By the date of this report total income from book sales was £3,616.10 and 396 books had been sold.

As regards Other Activities, the excess of income over expenditure for other activities is £64.28 as analysed in the Financial Statement below, which together with the previous year's credit balance brought forward, shows a credit balance carried forward £3,799.96.

SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2019

		£
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2018		
General	3,735.68	
Village Voices	2,908.21	
		6,643.89
EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR		
General	64.28	
Village Voices	38.50	
		102.78
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2019		
General	3,799.96	
Village Voices	2,946.71	
		6,746.67

GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:

CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	6,500.00
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	146.67
CASH IN HAND	100.00
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2019	6,746.67

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2018 TO 31ST AUGUST 2019

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE		£
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,302.00	NEWSLETTER		757.30
AGM	1,392.00	AGM		1,102.12
LODDON BREWERY VISIT	177.50	LODDON BREWERY VISIT		170.00
CAVERSHAM GARDENS	196.80	CAVERSHAM GARDENS		114.27
BRUNEL & GWR	267.00	BRUNEL & GWR		131.63
WORMSLEY GARDENS	180.00	WORMSLEY GARDENS		180.00
FILM CLUB	504.00	FILM CLUB		714.39
TEA PARTY	550.00	TEA PARTY		407.32
BANK INTEREST	13.03	SUBSCRIPTIONS		109.00
		GENERAL EXPENSES		495.87
		LIABILITY INSURANCE		336.15
VILLAGE VOICES INCOME:		VILLAGE VOICES EXPENDITURE:		
VILLAGE VOICES BOOK SALES	38.50	Miscellaneous		0.00
		EXCESS (DEFICIT) INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR		
		General	64.28	
		Village Voices	38.50	
				102.78
	4,620.83			4,620.83

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 2019.

Sonning:
12th September 2019

A.G.A.Williams
Chartered Accountant

Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Patrick Hamblin, Chairman of Panel

This is my sixth year as Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Panel. The current members of the Panel are Mike Hart, Andy Bell (Secretary), Bob Hine, David Bates, Bob Hulley and Jeremy Gilmore, with additional assistance from Ali Driver (environmental advisor). I would like to thank the Panel members for their support throughout the year.

Panel meetings continue to 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. Please check before attending with a Panel member as it is sometimes necessary to change the date at fairly short notice.

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. We have attended almost all the SPC Planning Committee meetings in this last twelve months.

Lists of planning applications for both Sonning (published by Wokingham Borough Council) and Sonning Eye (published by South Oxfordshire District Council) are available on-line and are also displayed on the Society's website. These are discussed at the Panel meetings or by electronic means if urgent.

From October 2018 to September 2019 a total of 31 applications have been reviewed. This is in fact less than the previous year's figure of 54. Representations are made to the respective Planning Authority on issues that are seen to be significant, including supporting applications where appropriate. In the past year representations have been made to the appropriate authorities relating to various issues including the following:

- The condition of the verge in the centre of the A4 between Pound Lane and Sonning Lane
- Supporting proposals for parking restrictions in Sonning Lane
- Frizers Farm appeal
- The provision of additional speed humps in Charvil Lane
- The provision of a speed indicator device in Sonning Lane (addressed to SPC)
- The Local Plan update (February 2019)
- 22 Pound Lane
- The Great House
- Sonning Golf Club
- Provision of incorrect yellow lines for parking restrictions
- Suggested improvements for Pearson Road/High Street junction
- The Atrium
- Removal of yellow lines when road resurfaced
- Additions to the Local Plan update (September 2019).

The provision of parking restrictions in Sonning Lane is a good improvement except that at the time of writing this report they have been obliterated following resurfacing of the road. The improved parking arrangement for Reading Blue Coat School pupils has assisted to alleviate the traffic problems in Sonning Lane.

The Society will be monitoring any proposals to develop the Old Redingensians sports ground off the A4 and continues to monitor the Local Plan updates. In connection with the latter it is understood that a draft Local Plan will be produced by WBC by the end of the year.

The Society has continued to support the Sonning Eye Action Group relating to flooding issues.

The aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan for Sonning is covered in the Chairman's report.

Your Planning and Traffic Panel will continue to make comments to the relevant authorities where it is considered appropriate. We do not have success in every case but we continue to believe that we have made a difference to Sonning and Sonning Eye.

Membership Report

Lesley Heaney, Membership Secretary

We are pleased to have had a particularly positive response at the Village Show this year, which means the Society's membership stands at 233, this figure is composed as follows:

5 Corporate 190 Double 35 Single

3 Honorary Life members

We are always happy to hear of potential new members - if you see a new neighbour please contact Lesley Heaney via membership@sonning.org.uk so that we can make contact.

Education & Social Panel

Pauline Simmonds, Chair of Panel

WWe held four talks in the Pearson Hall this year. The history and occupants of Caversham Court, further along the Thames, were explored on the first evening in February. Lionel Williams gave us an excellent lecture about the Sonning cutting, the Great Western Railway and Brunel's great engineering achievements in the second, but on the third evening we visited Nepal. Alastair Driver, a Sonning resident, had been to the Bardia National Park recently so, although it was not a local topic, his first-hand account of the conservation challenges facing its inhabitants and amazing wildlife photos were greatly enjoyed. And, of course, we return to home ground this evening with a talk about The Mill from Sally Hughes.

Our outside Summer events were very well attended. In May a group visited the 18th century Walled Garden on the Wormsley Estate in the Chilterns which was very successful - and the Pub lunch proved to be a very welcomed addition! In July we entertained about 60 members and guests to a Champagne and Strawberry Tea in a lovely garden in Thames Street and the Heritage Walks in mid-September attracted over 70 visitors.

So a busy and varied year – something for everyone. My thanks go to the team, Annabella, Patrick, Joyce and Diana for all their ideas and practical help and particularly to Penny, our other panel member, for dealing with the ticket sales - a very important job. Thank you as members of the Society for supporting our events. I look forward to seeing you again in the New year.

Minutes of 15th AGM, Pearson Hall, 17 November 2018

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Mike Hart welcomed everyone to the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Society. He said that he was pleased that the event had attracted another good turnout and wished everyone an enjoyable evening.

2. APOLOGIES

Andy Bell said that apologies for absence had been received from Shelagh & Peter Flower, Gordon & Mary Jones, Bob & Heather Hine, Jonathan & Kathy Crump, Joan Westbrook, Mark & Jackie Holland, Theresa & Philip May, Jean Milbourn, Stella Beardmore & Mike Melton, Ann Brown & Roger Olden, Daphne & Keith Nichols and Belinda & Ali Driver.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 18 November 2017, were approved without amendment on the proposal of Bart Guthrie, seconded by Roger Simmonds.

4. BRIEF REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PANELS

a) Chairman's Report

Mike Hart said that his report was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2017/2018, which had been emailed to all Society members prior to the Annual General Meeting. He summarised the report, saying that the Executive Committee had met six times during the year with good attendance at every meeting. Mike Hart went on to thank the retiring Committee for their help and dedication. He said that the Education & Social Panel, led by Pauline Simmonds, had organised many excellent and well-attended events. The Planning & Traffic Panel, under the leadership of Patrick Hamblin, had met monthly and had made a number of representations to the relevant local authority, both in favour and against planning applications. Mike Hart also mentioned Jeremy Gilmore, who had produced four excellent issues of Bridge during the year as well as providing his technical expertise in the updating of the Society's website. He thanked Lesley Heaney for her efforts as Membership Secretary, Annabella Marks for looking after the interests of Sonning Eye members, the willing band of volunteers, particularly Penny

Feathers and Joyce & Jim Reed, who helped Pauline Simmonds with the organisation and running of the social and educational events, and those who distributed copies of Bridge to the members.

Mike Hart went on to say that the Society was grateful to the Sonning Fire Brigade Trust for agreeing to cover the cost of an improved audio system to complement the projector and screen that the Trust funded in 2017. He said that once the new audio system was in place the Society was to go ahead with a regular monthly film club, hopefully starting early in 2019. Classic films as well as current movies were to be shown. A fee of probably £5.00 per head would be charged to cover the cost of renting the films and the hiring of Pearson Hall.

In conclusion, Mike Hart said that the membership of the Society had increased during the year and now stood at 223. He welcomed the new members and thanked them and the regulars for their interest and continuing support of the Society.

b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Patrick Hamblin said that his report was also set out in the Annual Report & Accounts. Since the report was prepared, a further six applications had been reviewed by the Panel. The Panel was also monitoring Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan Update. Patrick Hamblin said that his report was incorrect in saying that all but one of the proposed sites in Sonning had been removed from the update. It was now known that of the original seven Sonning sites, one had been removed and one had received planning permission. Of the remaining five sites, four were proposed for housing and one for gypsies/travellers. The Local Plan Update was now out for public consultation, with a deadline for comments of 15 February 2019. Local briefing sessions were to be held by Wokingham Borough Council, including sessions in Woodley and Twyford. Patrick Hamblin said that the Society would be attending one or more of these sessions. Furthermore, an article on the Local Plan Update was to appear in the next issue of Bridge. It was hoped that local residents would engage in the consultation process.

Patrick Hamblin went on to say that there had been a vast improvement in the parking of cars in Sonning Lane. He said that the previous day there had been only six cars parked in Sonning Lane between the A4 and Reading Blue Coat School, compared with 60 or more not long ago. The efforts of the Headmaster of Reading Blue Coat School in bringing about this improvement were greatly appreciated. The long awaited plans for parking restrictions in Sonning Lane had just been published by Wokingham Borough Council, which, when implemented, should further improve the situation.

Patrick Hamblin concluded his report by saying that the Panel will continue to comment on planning applications. The Panel was not always successful but would keep on trying.

c) Education & Social Panel Report

Pauline Simmonds said that the Panel had made an early start in 2018 with talks in January and February. They had proved very popular with more than 60 members and guests attending each event. The talk in April on John Piper by the Rev Ian Browne had also been well attended, as had the visit to the Loddon Brewery in October. The Society's stand at the Village Show in September had been a success, promoting the Society's activities and attracting new members. Later that month, Diana Coulter and Brian O'Callaghan had organised an 'Architectural and Historical Tour', which had been greatly enjoyed by members and new residents. Pauline Simmonds finished her report by thanking Patrick Hamblin and Bob Hine for their help in organising two of the events, Penny Feathers for handling ticket sales and Lesley Heaney for her emails to members advertising the events. She also thanked members and guests for their continuing support and said that two events had already been planned for 2019.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Furness said that the financial report for the year ending 31 August 2018 was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2017/2018. He said that there had been excess income over expenditure for the year of £295.88. The General Fund remained healthy with a credit balance as at 31 August 2018 of £6,643.89. Alan Furness invited questions from the floor but there were none.

6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mike Hart reported that Allan Williams had kindly agreed to continue as Independent Examiner for another year. He thanked Allan Williams for agreeing to do so.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Andy Bell took over the Chair for the election of the Chairman. He said that there was one nomination only. The nominee was Mike Hart, whose nomination had been proposed by David Bates and seconded by Lesley Bates. He invited someone from the floor to propose the election of Mike Hart as Chairman. Annabella Marks did so and Sue Bell seconded the motion. The proposal was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

Andy Bell handed back the Chair to Mike Hart for the election of the Society's three other officers. Mike Hart said that the nominations were as follows: Vice Chairman: Bob Hine, proposed by Geoffrey Harvey, seconded by David Bates; Honorary Secretary: Andy Bell, proposed by Jean Hutchinson, seconded by Roger Hutchinson and Honorary Treasurer: Gemma Roberts, proposed by Alan Furness, seconded by Bob Hine. It was proposed by Hazel Russell and seconded by Linda Peters and agreed unanimously that the three aforementioned nominees be elected en bloc.

8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mike Hart said that there were four nominations for election to the Executive Committee. These were: Alastair Driver, proposed by Bob Hine, seconded by Andy Bell; Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Lesley Heaney, seconded by Pauline Simmonds; Patrick Hamblin, proposed by Trefor Fisher, seconded by Gemma Roberts; and Annabella Marks, proposed by Lesley Heaney, seconded by Andy Bell. It was proposed by Judith Hart and seconded by Peter van Went and agreed unanimously that the four aforementioned nominees be elected en bloc.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mike Hart said that he had received a note from Jane Gascoine asking three questions, all of which related to the Great House/Coppa Club. Her three questions were: 1. Have they got planning permission for the pods on the lawn? 2. If so, why was it granted when they have not got enough parking spaces and are parking all over the village? 3. Why don't they use the overflow car park for their staff and run a shuttle service? MH thanked Jane Gascoine for her questions. He said that the need for planning permission for the pods would be investigated. As for the use of the overflow car park, an appeal against the decision by South Oxfordshire District Council to refuse a change of use of the land was outstanding. Jane Gascoine followed up by saying that the Headmaster of Reading Blue Coat School should be thanked for his efforts in bringing about the improvement in the parking situation in Sonning Lane. MH responded by saying that this was in hand.

Before the meeting was brought to a close, Annabella Marks thanked Alan Furness for all that he had done for the Society over the past 11 years. The meeting fully endorsed her remarks and warmly applauded Alan Furness in appreciation of all his hard work.

There being no further business to discuss, Mike Hart closed the meeting by thanking everyone once again for their attendance.

Tuesday 26th November 2019. Doors open 7pm film 7.30pm. Rocketman is an epic musical fantasy about the uncensored human story of Elton John's breakthrough years, starring Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden and Bruce Dallas Howard. Director Dexter Fletcher. Produced 2019.

Tuesday 17th December 2019. Doors open 7pm film 7.30pm. The film is based on a true story about Port Isaac's Fishermen's friends, a group of Cornish Fishermen who were signed up by Universal Records and achieved a top ten hit with their debut album. Starring Daniel Mays, James Purefoy and Tuppence Middleton.

Tuesday 21st January 2020. Doors open 7pm film 7.30pm. It is 1961 and Rudolf Nureyev, not yet the imperious figure of legend, is a member of the world renowned Kirov Ballet Company, travelling for the first time outside the Soviet Union.
Starring Adele Exarchopoulos, Ralph Fiennes and Oleg Ivenko. Directed by Ralph Fiennes.

Tuesday 25th February. 2020 Door open 7pm film 7.30pm. The Aftermath is set in post war Germany 1946. Rachel Morgan (Kiera Knightley) arrives in the ruins of Hamburg in the bitter winter, to be reunited with her husband Lewis (Jason Clarke), a British Colonel charged with rebuilding the shattered city. Produced 2019.

Tuesday 24th March 2020. Doors open 7pm film 7.30pm. The Quiet American is a 2002 film adaption of Graham Greene's novel set in Vietnam in the early 1950s. An old British reporter vies with a young US doctor for the affections of a beautiful Vietnamese woman.
The film stars Michael Cane, Brendan Fraser and DoThi Hai Yen. Directed by Phillip Noyce.

Many thanks for the photos of the tea party from Rod Thomas (pages 3, 4) and the elephant safari courtesy of Alastair Driver (page 4).