



# 2022/2023

## Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2022/2023

# Executive Committee Report

Mike Hart, Chairman

This is the 19<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Society, the first having taken place in Pearson Hall on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2004. So we are entering our 20<sup>th</sup> year, something of a milestone and worthy of a celebration next year!

The Society's year was overshadowed by the worsening health of our Honorary Secretary Andy Bell followed in late July by his untimely death. Andy was a stalwart of the Society having been Secretary since 2009, more than that he was a good friend and we miss him greatly.

The Society's Executive Committee members this year have been Mike Hart (Chairman), Bob Hine (Vice Chairman), Andy Bell (Hon. Secretary), Joan Collins (Hon. Treasurer), Jeremy Gilmore, Patrick Hamblin (Chairman of Planning & Traffic Panel), Heather Kay (Chairman of Education and Social Panel), Penny Feathers, Huw Thomas, Deborah Simmons and Annabella Marks. Helen Johnson was elected at the last AGM but resigned for personal reasons and Lesley Heaney was co-opted to the committee in compliance with restrictions in the Constitution on maximum periods of committee membership to continue as Membership Secretary. When Andy Bell became too ill to carry out his duties Deborah Simmons agreed to take over as Honorary Secretary. 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.

All the above serving committee

members are willing to stand again for election except Bob Hine who gave notice last year that this would be his last on the committee. Bob was Chairman from 2007 to 2013 and has been Vice Chairman since then so we are sorry to lose him and his wit and wisdom from the committee but are most grateful for all that he has done for the Society over the years.

Your committee met six times during the year with good attendance at every meeting. Our quarterly magazine, *Bridge*, has continued to be published, the Coronation issue beat all records with 12 pages. Our thanks go to Jeremy for maintaining such a high standard.

The Planning and Traffic panel continued to be represented on the Sonning Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, finalisation of the Plan has been delayed mainly due to the delay in publication of Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan with which our Neighbourhood Plan must conform. We were hugely disappointed that WBC approved two planning applications this year to build over 100 new dwellings and are now facing a 25% increase in the housing stock of the parish with no enhancement of the infrastructure to support the increase in population. Patrick Hamblin's report on other activities of the panel can be read within.

As described by Heather Kay later in this report the Education and Social panel organised an interesting programme of visits and talks. Unfortunately it has become



Nicki McCann, Education Officer for Waltham Place, was our speaker at last year's AGM

necessary to terminate the film club as the licence costs of showing films exceeded the revenue from ticket sales but we are planning on organising more talks to fill the gap.

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. As reported in *Bridge* we are reviewing whether our status as an unincorporated association needs to be changed to a small registered charity and will report back to our members on the results of our review in due course.

I would like to thank the volunteers who helped 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.

# Financial Report for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023

Joan Collins, Honorary Treasurer

For this year's report, the General Fund is analysed for all Activities.

As regards to the Activities, the excess of income over expenditure for all activities is (£181.81) 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 £6,342.96.

## SONNING & SONNING EYE SOCIETY

### GENERAL FUND AT 31ST AUGUST 2023

	£
BALANCE AT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2022	7161.77
EXCESS INCOME (DEFICIT) OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	<u>(818.81)</u>
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2023	<u>6342.96</u>
<b>GENERAL FUND REPRESENTED BY:</b>	
CASH AT BANK - RESERVE ACCOUNT	6,000.00
CASH AT BANK - CURRENT ACCOUNT	242.96
CASH IN HAND	<u>100.00</u>
BALANCE AT 31ST AUGUST 2023	<u>6,342.96</u>

### INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2023

<u>INCOME</u>	£	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	£
	2022/23		2022/23
MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTIONS	1,315.08	NEWSLETTER	841.13
AGM	1,328.00	AGM	1,348.74
HEIR & SPARE TALK	138.00	HEIR & SPARE TALK	124.19
SHAW HOUSE TALK	129.00	SHAW HOUSE TALK	85.34
VC MEDAL HOLDERS TALK	140.00	VC MEDAL HOLDERS TALK	86.90
KENNET & AVON CANAL TALK	152.00	KENNET & AVON CANAL TALK	97.14
CORONATION CELEBRATIONS	2,499.00	CORONATION CELEBRATIONS	2,747.03
WALTHAM PLACE VISIT	457.00	WALTHAM PLACE VISIT	459.45
SONNING GUIDED WALKS	85.00	SONNING GUIDED WALKS	0.00
FILM CLUB	555.00	FILM CLUB	888.89
VILLAGE VOICES PROJECT	88.00	VILLAGE VOICES PROJECT	0.00
VILLAGE SHOW	7.00	VILLAGE SHOW	0.00
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	0.00	NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING	0.00
BANK INTEREST	60.81	SUBSCRIPTIONS	73.00
GENERAL EXPENSES	16.00	GENERAL EXPENSES	695.07
		LIABILITY INSURANCE	341.82
		EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER	
		INCOME FOR THE YEAR (DEFICIT)	(818.81)
	<u>6,969.89</u>		<u>6,969.89</u>

#### Accountant's Report

In accordance with the instructions from the Chair of the Executive Committee I have reviewed the above General Fund and Income and Expenditure Account prepared by the Treasurer 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 2023.

St Anne's Cottage, High Street, Sonning RG4 6UP  
16 October 2023

Jonathan Crump

# Planning & Traffic Panel Report

Patrick Hamblin, Chairman of Panel

This is my tenth year as Chairman of the Planning and Traffic Panel. The current members of the Panel are Mike Hart, David Bates, Jeremy Gilmore, Bob Hine, Bob Hulley, and Ian Runnalls, with additional assistance from Prof Alastair Driver (Environmental Advisor). The Panel was extremely saddened following the death of our Secretary Andy Bell earlier this year, and our thoughts are with his family. I would like to thank the Panel members for their continuing support throughout the year. We are pleased to have representation on the Panel by the Sonning Parish Chair, Councillor Trefor Fisher, acting as an observer.

Panel meetings continue to take place normally monthly, but not when there are no applications for discussion. 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 short notice.

We continue with our liaison with Sonning Parish Council, made easier by its representation on the Panel.

Lists of planning applications for both Sonning, published by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Sonning Eye, published by South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), are reviewed and are available on-line. It is these applications that are discussed at the Panel meetings or by email if urgent.

From October 2022 to September 2023 a total of 47 applications have been reviewed. This is less than in the 2021/2022 year, where there were 62 applications, but looking back a few years to the 2018/2019 year there were only 31 applications. 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 applications, including the following:

- *Land south of Old Bath Road, Sonning (a subsequent decision by WBC has approved the development of 57 dwellings in three blocks suitable for older persons' accommodation)*
- *The Acre, Thames Street, Sonning*
- *Pauline's Field, Sonning Eye*
- *The Mill at Sonning*
- *Sonning Golf Club practice area (a subsequent decision by WBC has approved the development of 50 houses)*
- *Acrefield, Charvil Lane, Sonning*
- *15 metres high mast in Sonning Lane, Sonning*
- *49 West Drive, Sonning*
- *Reading Blue Coat School, Sonning Lane*
- *The Old Cottage, Pearson Road, Sonning*

## Care Homes applications – Pound Lane

The initial planning applications for both a care home on the site of the 12 houses on the edge of Sonning Golf

Course and on the site of 101/101A Pound Lane were both refused by WBC. Both applications were appealed but in both cases were refused.

## Local Plan Update

Following the publication of the Revised Growth Strategy Consultation document by WBC in November 2021, extensive comments were provided by the Society. However, WBC is now waiting for the release of the revised National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) by the Government before proceeding with their review.

## Gateway in Sonning Lane

Following discussions by the Society with SPC regarding the replacement of the gateway at the bottom end of Sonning Lane, SPC has in turn been consulting with WBC and replacement gateways have now been installed.

## Third Thames Crossing

A document issued in 2022 headed 'A Strategic Investment Plan for the South-East,' published by 'Transport for the South-East' made brief references to a 'Reading Third Crossing' and a timetable for considering all the various improvements in the document. The timetable did not suggest there is anything going to happen soon and there is no further news.

## Community Speed Watch

The Sonning Community Speed Watch (CSW) team was set up in July 2022. So far permission has been given to conduct checks at five sites - two locations in Charvil Lane, two in Pound Lane and one in Sonning Lane.

The Sonning CSW group has recorded approximately 1,000 offenders in the last rolling year and the maximum number of offenders is 151 in two hours in Charvil Lane. One offender has been logged five times!

Offending vehicles, those exceeding the speed limit plus 10% plus 2 mph, are reported to Thames Valley Police. The vehicle owners are then automatically sent a warning letter. The registration number of any vehicle accruing three or more warning letters (from anywhere in the UK) is entered into the Police National Computer. The vehicle will then get flagged up by any ANPR-equipped patrol car and a special watch will be kept in case of any further offences.

## Speed limit restriction – Sonning Bridge to Sonning Eye Roundabout

Following the very serious accident outside the French Horn earlier this year, the Panel has been in contact with Eye & Dunsden Parish Council (E&DPC) with the recommendation that the speed limit on this stretch of road is reduced to 20mph from 30mph. E&DPC had in fact already taken this up with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and it is understood that OCC has responded indicating that, if this is accepted, it will be summer 2024 before the change is made.





# Eye & Dunsden Neighbourhood Development Plan

Deborah Simmons, Member of the Eye & Dunsden Steering Committee

Strong progress continues to be made on the Eye & Dunsden NDP, which focuses on the villages of Sonning Eye, Playhatch and Dunsden Green. With the evidence base completed to include reports on the landscape, heritage assets, biodiversity etc. as well as proposed green spaces and green corridors, the next step is to start the Regulation 14 public consultation process which it is hoped will be started in the next few weeks.

This process lasts for 6 weeks during which time local residents and businesses are invited to review

the draft NDP and the evidence base (the information which supports and influences the policies identified and the focus of the plan) and provide their comments on the draft to the Steering Committee for consideration. A leaflet will be delivered to each house in the Parish before the consultation starts providing information both on the draft plan and the process of consultation to ensure that everyone has the information that they need to participate in this stage of the process, should they wish to. The draft plan will be available on-line to enable easy access however it

will also be available in a hard-copy form at three locations – one in each village. Sally Hughes of The Mill has very kindly agreed that a copy of the plan can be made available at The Mill in Sonning for residents who can perhaps enjoy a coffee and a piece of cake as they read through the document!

An approximate time-line for the journey towards the final referendum on the NDP will be included in the leaflet. More information will be made available over the coming weeks via the NDP Facebook page or sign up at [plan@eyedunsden.org](mailto:plan@eyedunsden.org).

## Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> AGM, held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### 1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Mike Hart welcomed everyone to the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Society. He said that it was good to be back in the Pearson Hall again after the absence due to Covid-19. The number of guests attending the dinner had been increased again to 80 as the event remains popular. A delicious supper and interesting guest speaker would follow as usual

### 2. APOLOGIES

Andy Bell announced a few apologies from Members and their guests including Joan Collins, Penny Feathers, Judith Hart and Pauline and Roger Simmonds.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021, were approved without amendment on the proposal of Theresa May, seconded by Barton Guthrie.

### 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 2021/2022, which had been emailed to all Society members prior to the Annual General Meeting. He said that all members of the current Committee were willing to stand for re-election other than Ali Driver and that Bob Hine had indicated that this would be his last year having been Chairman and Vice Chairman for many years. Mike was pleased that four new members had volunteered to come onto the Committee.

Mike thanked Heather Kay for arranging the interesting programme of talks. Sadly, attendances at both film showings were disappointing such that the income received did not cover the cost of staging the events. The Planning and Traffic panel had a busy year. Thanks to Patrick Hamblin several letters were sent to WBC regarding planning applications.

Mike continued by thanking Jeremy Gilmore for an excellent job in producing further issues of Bridge. He said that Jeremy would welcome articles from members to fill the eight pages in each issue, especially if they were of local interest.

Mike concluded his report by saying that membership of the Society had remained strong with 230 members. He said that the Society welcomed new members and thanked all the regulars for their interest and involvement in the Society's activities. Mike also thanked all the volunteers who helped with the organisation and running of social and educational events and those who distributed copies of Bridge to our members.

## **b) Planning & Traffic Panel Report**

Patrick Hamblin reported on the Planning and Traffic Panel activities. He said that 62 applications had been reviewed and the panel had made several representation to WBC both opposing and supporting the applications. The two applications for dementia care homes in Pound Lane, 57 flats in Old Bath Road and the proposed 54 houses on Sonning Golf Course were examples where the Society had opposed the applications.

Work on the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for Sonning was progressing, albeit at a slower pace than desired due mainly to the delay in WBC producing their Local Plan following the cancellation of the garden town at Grazeley. This had opened the door to the addition of the 54 houses on Sonning Golf Course which was strongly opposed by the Society and Sonning Parish Council. Some discussion on that application resulted, Mike Hart reported that a meeting had taken place with the executives of Wokingham Borough Council attended by Theresa May to stress the strength of opposition to this site and the proliferation of new large housing applications in Sonning and the surrounding area.

## **c) Education & Social Panel Report**

Mike Hart summarised the events organised in the past year including the visits to Reading Abbey and the Fairmile Vineyard, the talks on the Pleasure & Leisure of the Victorians, Crossing the Thames and an Heir & a Spare. Events had also included celebrations arranged by the Society to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and a stand at the Village Show. Two films had been shown at the Film Club but attendance had been disappointing. Mike said that he was looking forward to the after-dinner talk by Nikki McCann on Waltham Place as this would be a good introduction to a potential visit.

## **5. TREASURER'S REPORT**

In the unavoidable absence of Joan Collins, Mike Hart referred to the financial report for the year ended 31 August 2022 which was set out in the Annual Report & Accounts of the Society 2021/2022 issued to members in advance. Mike said that the Society's financial position remained healthy with a credit balance as at 31 August 2022 of £7,161.77.

## **6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Mike Hart reported that Jonathan Crump had agreed to take over the role as Independent Examiner for the forthcoming year replacing Alan Furness who was standing down. He thanked Alan for all the voluntary work he had put in as Independent Examiner over the preceding years.

## **7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mike Hart was pleased to report that there were seven nominations for election to the Executive Committee. These were: Penny Feathers: proposed by Mike Hart and seconded by Andy Bell; Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Patrick Hamblin, seconded by David Bates; Patrick Hamblin, proposed by Mike Hart, seconded by Sue Bell; Lesley Heaney, proposed by Shelagh Flower, seconded by Peter Flower; Heather Kay, proposed by Mike Hart, seconded by Annabella Marks; Annabella Marks, proposed by Deborah Simmons, seconded by Nick Marks; Helen Johnson proposed by Lesley Heaney, seconded by Bob Hine. The nominations were proposed and seconded from the floor and the seven aforementioned nominees were elected en bloc.

## **8. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Mike Hart said that there were six nominations for election to the Executive Committee. These were: Alastair Driver, proposed by Linda Peters, seconded by Jean Hutchinson; Jeremy Gilmore, proposed by Andrew Barker, seconded by Andy Bell; Patrick Hamblin, proposed by Josephine Hamblin, seconded by Sue Bell; Lesley Heaney, proposed by Shelagh Flower, seconded by Peter Flower; Heather Kay, proposed by Sue Bell, seconded by Suzanne Farquhar; and Annabella Marks, proposed by Nicholas Marks, seconded by Andy Bell. It was proposed by Judy Baldwin and seconded by Carole Collier and agreed unanimously that the six aforementioned nominees be elected en bloc.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mike Hart invited members to raise any other items of business but none were forthcoming.

There being no other business to discuss, Mike Hart thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.55 p.m.

