

THE MOSELEY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 19th MAY, 2011, 7.30 p.m.
at The Post Office Building, Alcester Road, Moseley.

Geoff Rees welcomed all to the meeting. There were 44 members present.

Dr Alison Millward was thanked for coming to give her talk but asked to do this before the formal meeting, as it was audibly plain that she should have been in bed nursing a cold and sore throat. She gave a presentation about what has become known as the Big Plan for Moseley, explaining the reasons why the community was taking the lead in consulting on and preparing this plan. The Moseley Regeneration Group [known as the Regen Group] which is made up of representatives from the Moseley Community Development Trust; Forum; The Society; Traders' Association and Moseley in Bloom is doing the work, supported by Councillor Ernie Hendricks, Planning Aid West Midlands and officers from the Planning Department. The plan is intended for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document [SPD] that will sit within the local planning framework and replace the Moseley Action Plan, adopted in 1992. Alison described the results of the first consultation exercise, how the document is being drafted and the next stages of formal consultation. She stressed that in order to be formally adopted within the city's planning framework, the Moseley Plan needed to be robust, written in technically correct language and able to stand up to scrutiny on appeal.

Following her presentation there was a lively discussion and much interest shown in the Plan. In reply to questions Alison gave more details of the timetable and the resources still needed to complete the process. She said that closure of Planning Aid West Midlands, due to loss of funding, might cause delay.

Councillor Hendricks said that because a community-led SPD was a first for the city, officers were keen to see it succeed – but also anxious that nothing was included that was undeliverable because the necessary resources would never be available.

Alison asked what people thought about the idea of seeking to merge the two conservation areas by including the short stretch of Oxford Road that separates them. She said that she knew that Fiona Adams had reservations about this proposal, which had been made with the aim of promoting visitors to explore Moseley and include Moseley Bog and the Tolkien connections, accessed via the St Agnes area. Fiona Adams said that her reservations were the lack of resources in the Planning Department to effect such a merger, and also that the St Agnes area had a cohesive Arts and Crafts character whereas the character of the Moseley Conservation Area was much more varied. Robert Orme said that he would consult residents in St Agnes to find out what they think of the idea.

Christine Hemming suggested that greater use should be made of Article 4[2] Directions in the Moseley Conservation Area in order to protect more of the details on the large Victorian buildings that are valued for their window types, front boundary walls and other features that contribute so much to the character of the area. She suggested that increasing use of Article 4[2] Directions should be part of the new Plan.

Joe Holyoak advised the Regen Group to be cautious about the proposal to create a Business Improvement District [BID] in Moseley, as the businesses would gain more power over the public realm and might have ideas that residents opposed.

Councillor Mullaney said that the Kings Heath BID worked well, creating the Kings Heath Centre Partnership that took the views of residents into account. He gave details of the type of environmental improvements that had been made in Kings Heath.

Mark Eftichou, Chairman of the Moseley Business Association, said that BIDs had worked well in other areas, raising revenue and helping to fill gaps in the day-time economy.

Councillor Mullaney said that he hoped that the Plan would include an intention to create parking for shoppers at the northern end of the village. If one of the existing supermarkets failed as a result of the creation of the new Tesco with parking on-site, then he hoped some of the space vacated could be used to create off-street parking. He also questioned if there would be support for bus priority measures. He suggested that while most people would agree that de-cluttering pavements of unnecessary signs etc was admirable, one of the most contentious issues would be the inclusion of 'shared space' in which the physical boundary between road and pavement would be blurred. Alison replied that there was not a single model of shared space but a variety from which to chose, and the ideas had been discussed and tested with people with specific disabilities, including blindness and head injury.

Alison was thanked for her work on preparing the Plan, for putting forward so many good ideas and presenting them in such an interesting way, especially when unwell.

The formal meeting was then held.

1. APOLOGIES had been received from John Dring, Claire Spencer, Rosemary Turner, Paul Lindley, Jean Gilkison, Maggie Cotton, Joyce Elliott, Richard and Ruth Tetlow, Cathy Greenhill, Eric Adams.

The Chairman asked members of the Committee who were present to introduce themselves.

2. MINUTES of the last AGM held on 20th May 2010.

The Secretary said that the Minutes had been emailed to all members with email addresses known to the Society, and, as advertised in the Newsletter, they had also been available for inspection from the website, at Domestica and the Community Development Trust, or could be sent to any individual member on request. The Minutes were taken as read and agreed.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS.

The Annual Review containing reports of the different aspects of the Society's work had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the Chairman asked for questions. In reply to a question from Christine Hemming about the effect on the reduction of resources available at the Planning Department on the Society's ability to monitor planning applications, and in particular to see if conditions placed on planning permissions were fulfilled, Fiona Adams said that the information about plans and conditions was available on the planning website. The difficulty lay in the number of planning approvals and the amount of time and work involved. She said that the Society had never been able to monitor all the developments taking place and had always relied on individual members and the strong residents' associations in Moseley who drew attention to contraventions taking place.

There were no further questions on the reports

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS.

Presenting his report, the Treasurer Mike Marlow said that he remained extremely grateful to Joyce Elliott who had prepared the accounts.

He said that there had been a ten percent reduction in general funds, and almost all the restricted fund for use at the dovecote had now been spent. He highlighted the important contribution that Gift Aid made to the Society's balances

Fiona Adams said that the details of a proposal about how to raise income from increased subscription rates was still being discussed, but meanwhile the most effective way to increase membership income would be to increase membership, and she urged members present to take new member forms away with them a recruit friends and neighbours.

There were no questions about the accounts which were adopted on a motion put by Mike Marlow, seconded by Geoff Rees and supported unanimously.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.

Geoff Rees said that the constitution allowed for 15 committee members. George Macleod had decided to stand down as co-chairman and from the committee, which left one vacancy. Fiona Adams said that Jean Gilkison, a member living in Church Avenue who had shown a particular interest in licensing issues and other planning and transportation matters affecting the centre of Moseley, had attended some committee meetings and was prepared to join the committee.

Geoff Rees said that he, Mike Marlow and Fiona Adams were prepared to continue in their present roles, and he was delighted that Helen Minovi had agreed to share the role of chairman with him.

The Chairman confirmed that all other committee members were prepared to continue. With a proposal put by John Dowell, and seconded by Esther Boyd, the Officers and Committee were then elected unanimously.

The 2011/12 Committee is
 Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees [Co-Chairmen]
 Mike Marlow [Treasurer]
 Fiona Adams [Secretary]
 Roy Cockel
 John Dring
 Jean Gilkison
 Paul Lindley
 Robert Orme
 Michael Potter
 John Rouse
 Claire Spencer
 Rosemary Turner
 John Underwood
 Sally Wright

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

1. Fiona Adams said that she wished to comment on the point raised by Joe Holyoak in the discussion about the Big Plan for Moseley. She said that The Society had been actively involved over many years in matters that affected the businesses in Moseley – such as the Moseley Shopfront Design Guide and the Non-retail uses in Moseley, both of which are supplementary planning documents. More recently the Special Licensing Policy for Central

Moseley had been introduced in response to a request from residents. She said that while she agreed with Joe that a Business Improvement District dominated by licensed premises might have adverse implications for residents, she thought that on the whole we should welcome strengthening the organisation of local businesses. Martin Mullaney said that in Kings Heath it was the small independent traders who had most enthusiasm and who decided how the funds raised by the additional business rate were allocated.

2. Michael Sheehan said he regarded many things that already happened in Moseley, including the work of the Moseley Society and of our local councillors, as contributing to the newly fashionable 'Big Society', but he wondered if the committee intended to join the newly formed organisation Civic Voice, which has risen from the ashes of the Civic Trust. Geoff Rees said that the Society was fortunate in having so many people with relevant professional skills involved in its activities and so unlike some other groups, did not need to turn either to the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association or Civic Voice for that type of support. However the committee did recognise the benefit in connecting with and learning from the activities of and ways other societies organised themselves. However the fee to join Civic Voice would be £500 p.a. and the committee had to be sure that this expenditure could be justified before deciding to spend such a large amount.

3. There was a general discussion about the rate of membership fees the Society should charge and no objection was raised to the idea of charging £10 per household per year.

There were no further questions.

The Chairman then paid tribute to his retiring co-chairman, George Macleod. He said that many of the gleaming smiles in Moseley were a tribute to his professional skill, while other community organisations such as '*Birmingham 13*' had also benefited from years of help from George. He thanked George not only for helping to chair the Society but also for having arranged such interesting programmes of speakers.

He then closed the meeting at 9 p.m.