

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

www.wooltonociety.org.uk

ISSUE NO 356 Autumn 2020

THE WOOLTON SOCIETY - SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR 48 YEARS



NEWSLETTER

For many years the Autumn issue of this newsletter has been devoted to the Annual General Meeting, with the agenda, minutes & membership forms the prominent features. However, this is not a normal year, with the majority of talks & events cancelled. The AGM will not take place, although all the officers & committee have agreed to continue for another year.

In a spirit of optimism the talks have been rescheduled to similar dates in 2021, but at this point it is not known whether the meetings as we have known them will be able to go ahead. Even if the hall is back in use there will undoubtedly be restrictions on numbers, & many other considerations to be taken into account.

The Woolton Society is exploring the possibility that talks could be conducted online using Zoom (or similar) until it is possible to meet again in person. The speaker in February has offered to give the talk in this way, & if St Mary's hall should be unavailable this will be an opportunity for more of us to embrace new technology. Members will be kept informed, & given notice of how the talk will be given.

In the meantime the society continues to work, with many members & residents contacting committee members & the website with comments & queries. The minutes from the 2019 AGM are printed here, to show the range of our activities. The account books have been sent off to our accountants for compilation of our annual financial statements as usual. Life goes on, & everyone has to learn a new normal.

The safety & well being of members is always the society's major consideration, & regular updates will be sent. It is hoped that newsletter 357, scheduled for January 2021 will bring more positive news.

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Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting of the Woolton Society held at St Mary's Church hall, Woolton on Wednesday 20th November 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Attendance:

Committee members: Jean Davies in the chair, Paul Wilkie (Vice Chairman/Hon. Secretary), Charles Davies (Hon. Treasurer), Janet Hudson (Environment secretary), Bob Collins, Viv Hicks, John Hibbert, Mike Cullen, Rob Kirby

Members: Anne Wilkie, Steven Kenny, Marie Passey, Irene Keane, Lesley McNamara, Olive Brown, Ian Crawford, John Tennant, Sue Carmichael, Edna Tennant, Pauline Roy, Monica Lowe, Dorothy Chance, David Massey, Pete Trewin, Beryl Pinnington, Thelma Grant, Alan Grant, Hugh Mantle, Diane Graney, David Graney, Anne Brayford, H Worthington, F Worthington.

The chairman welcomed all present and referred them to the meeting documents published in advance in the Society's newsletter No 352, together with the statement of accounts for the year ended 31 August 2019 distributed at the meeting.

1. Notice convening the meeting. This was read by the chairman.
2. Apologies for absence. Apologies were noted from Donna Jackson, Janet Hollinshead, Jean Bates, Allan Hicks, Linda Parsons, Janet Collins, Christine Vane, Ken Pye, Bernard Krasner, John Ashton, Barbara Doherty, Liz & Andrew Spencer, Carl & Pamela Baker, Carol and Andrew Zsigmond
3. Minutes of the 46th Annual General Meeting held on 21st November 2018 and distributed in advance to all members were proposed as read by Jean Davies and accepted as a true record, on a show of hands.

4. Chairman's remarks.

The chairman commented on some of the areas the society had been involved in, particularly the commissioning of blue plaques to highlight places of interest in our area. The first 3 of these are now in place, with the plaque marking the home of Inspector Menzies being formally unveiled by the Chief Constable last weekend. The committee are now considering sites for further plaques – any suggestions by email please. She invited other officers of the committee to give a report for their areas of responsibility.

i) The hon treasurer Charles Davies presented the accounts for the year ending 31 August 2019 and commented on some items. The accounts were accepted on a show of hands.

ii) The Hon. secretary, Paul Wilkie reported that the executive committee met 5 times during the year, 3 additional members were co-opted (Bob Collins, Rob Kirby and Mike Cullen), and there two resignations (Bernard Krasner and Donna Jackson). In the same period there have been 4 issues of the society's newsletter, ably edited by our chairman Jean Davies. Thanks are due to all involved in production and distribution of the newsletter. Viv Hicks organised another four evening and two afternoon talks, attracting very good attendances. Following the success of last year's innovations, the society has made the social event for members in the form of a quiz, and daytime meetings part of the regular schedule. All meetings were held this year at St Mary's Church Hall, and this venue has proved popular, as well as accommodating the large numbers we have had at recent meetings. This year the society again organised an outing, this time a visit to the Liverpool Medical Institution, followed by a tour of the Hope Street/ Rodney Street area led by member and blue badge guide Marie Passey. These were again very well received by those able to attend.

A point was raised from the floor that we should not overlook the activity manning a stall at the farmers' market, which does much to increase the visibility of the society.

iii) Environment Secretary Janet Hudson gave the following report.

Woolton Hall

There was a serious fire in the annexe close to the hall on 30th May 2019, though the hall itself was not affected. This fire made many residents realise that the possibility of losing the only grade 1 listed building in the area was a very real one. The present owners cannot be described as good custodians of the property and so local agencies must act to prevent the hall from further deterioration. Councillor Malcolm Kelly has worked tirelessly behind the scenes for years to save the hall and he called a multi-agency meeting on June 14th. In attendance were the local councillors Barbara Mace, Kris Brown and Mirna Juarez, representatives of the emergency services, several council officers and the Woolton Society chairman. However, since the meeting it is not clear whether the agreed inspections have taken place.

Byron Court

The Inspector ruled in December 2018 that the wall built in 2016 by Byron Court Management should be demolished so people could walk freely between Acrefield Road and Woolton Road. The footpath was added to the official register and so it became Number 77 on the council's Public Right of Way map. In May of this year the wall was still in place; Mr Cassidy served notice on the landowner and the management company that the wall must be demolished within 14 days or the council would do the job and send them the bill. The management company replied that the wall would be removed within 14 days, which was May 30th. Finally in late summer pedestrian access through Byron Court became possible. There is now a metal barrier in front of the opening, which may prove to be problematic to those using a wheelchair or pushing a pram/buggy, however the site has yet to be inspected by the Highways Dept. Green footpath signs have been erected on both Woolton Park and Acrefield Road. Thanks must be given to Mike Cassidy for all the work he did to achieve this result.

Rushton Properties

This is a twelve acre site, bounded by Hillfoot Road, Allerton Road and Camp Hill and is part of the green wedge. The owner has plans for a development of ten expensive houses on the site, plus a nature reserve at the Camp Hill end. Rushton Properties then made a formal application for this development to go ahead. The Woolton Society was notified of an appeal by Rushton Properties against the failure of Liverpool City Council to issue a decision on their application and so this planning application has now been referred to the Secretary of State and a decision will now be made by the Planning Inspectorate.

Strawberry Field

The new buildings featuring a visitors centre and cafeteria opened in the autumn. This project is also creating training and employment opportunities for vulnerable young adults. There is not a great amount of parking on site, the cafe is bright and cheerful and the grounds look lovely and as the planting matures this centre will be a real asset to Woolton. Many coaches are not using the newly created lay-by on Beaconsfield Road so causing traffic issues and the police have become involved.

Knolle Park

This has been subject to arson attacks and general vandalism to the buildings on this site throughout the year. It is now under new ownership. A notice had been served on the previous owners to allow the council to have entry and this continued to apply to the new owners, which a council officer was going to pursue further at the time of the meeting. The Woolton Society wrote to Liverpool City Council again reporting the dangerous condition of the sandstone boundary wall of the St Gabriels/Knolle Park property to Church Road over 18 months ago and again in May of this year. Although repairs were carried out there are now other areas where the sandstone wall is falling down. It is quite clear that from both a highway/public safety and a heritage point of view the situation is now critical. There is a very real danger of injury to passing pedestrians and to the wholesale removal of a historic sandstone wall, which is so important to the character of this building and this part of the city. The initial responsibility

for rectifying the problems lies with the owners of the site but given the condition of the wall and buildings and the length of time they have been vacant, action from them in the very near future seems remote.

The Lodge on Hillfoot Road

Concerns were raised about the appearance of the structure above the ground floor extended area. The response from the council was "My understanding is that the applicant wishes to retain the structure and is going to submit an application to retain it. We cannot prevent him from doing this and would not normally commence any enforcement action until the application was determined as such action could be deemed unreasonable ahead of any decision being made on the application - we will however give further consideration to this". The society is still waiting for further information.

It is the stated aim of the Woolton Society to preserve the integrity of the built environment of the village, however some recent additions to various premises have not been true to these ideals! Inappropriate signage, neon lights on buildings, structures on pavements. Nowhere Cafe has repainted its frontage to colours more in keeping with the village, although there is still a board on the side of the building in the original colour.

The Loft and Istanbul Restaurants no longer have decking outside them, however there are a few tables and chairs on the pavements outside these premises. Dostana no longer has the black structure in front of it.

Another huge problem for Woolton village is parking which is causing great concern and inconvenience for many people, especially around schools when children are being dropped off and collected. It is rare to see any parking enforcement in the village, so folk seem to think they can park wherever they choose. This is especially bad on the junction of Out Lane and Acrefield Road, where a camera has now been placed, but we are not sure if it is having the desired effect.

Many people are objecting to the proposal to replace one bungalow 'Springhill' on Runnymede Close with ten flats on three storeys and changing the entrance from Runnymede Close to open onto Woolton Park. The ward councillors are involved with the residents who have stated their objections.

The Woolton Society wish to praise those who do make an effort to keep to the guidelines for a conservation area and help to maintain high standards of planning and design. One such property is that of Woolton Tuition, the former estate agent on Allerton Road, backing onto Lodes Pond. This is a well maintained building, with signage appropriate to a conservation area and the owners are commended for their dedication to the planning guidelines.

Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033 – Updated Housing Supply Information has mapped the area including small pockets of land, small empty plots such as 1a St Mary's St and space at the bottom of Linkstor Rd and Linksvie. There is a danger that the green wedge which enhances the Woolton area will become swallowed up in car parks, widened roads, buildings and incremental expansion. There will be a substantial loss of trees, with further trees threatened due to root compression.

Although not in the Woolton Society area, you may know or experienced for yourselves that the path from Menlove Avenue over to Allerton Manor Golf Club is fenced over and has been for quite a while. The golf course manager says he sought advice from LCC and has closed the path on health and safety grounds. Although many people complained the ruling has been made that this path is no longer for public use. Allerton Golf Course - A planning application has been put in to build a hotel, change some of the course and create three new car parks for 350 cars.

Simpson Ground now has 3G pitches and hard surface car parks with proposed extension to this so becoming a brownfield site rather than a green field site.

Allerton Priory - The land at Allerton Priory by Woolton Road is now being built over by Redrow Housing with the substantial loss of its open green character and associated loss of heritage, biodiversity and habitats for a wide range of wildlife species. This is at a time when this summer Liverpool was mentioned as having poor air quality and we are all being told access to open spaces is good for us for exercise and our general wellbeing!

It is imperative that we all make our feelings known to the relevant bodies if we have any concerns about developments in the future, the society is one voice, individual communications increase the chance of being heard.

A point was raised from the floor about the state of some of the houses in the area, but it was explained that while regrettable, it was not within the scope of the society to ask people to carry out maintenance on private non-listed houses.

iv) Membership secretary Jean Bates reported that at the 2018/19 year end on 30th September we had 293 paid up members. For the past 5 years the end of year membership number has been steady, hovering around the 300 mark.

Membership Numbers	30/09/2018	30/09/2019
Paid	302	293
Pending Standing Order	14	14
Not Paid	91	127
Complimentary	12	13
Total	419	447

5. Election of new committee members.

Alan Grant indicated he was willing to stand, and being proposed by Viv Hicks and seconded by Rob Kirby, was unanimously elected.

6. Election of officers.

Chairman: The current chairman Jean Davies offered her resignation from the committee and was nominated for the position of chairman, and duly re-elected.

Paul Wilkie offered his resignation from the committee, but stated he was willing to continue as vice-chairman, and was nominated and duly re-elected to the post.

In the absence of nominations for the role of hon. secretary, Paul Wilkie volunteered to continue in this role, until a candidate could be found and was duly elected.

Hon. treasurer: Charles Davies offered his resignation from the committee, but stated he was willing to continue and was duly re-elected.

Membership secretary: The current incumbent, Jean Bates offered her resignation from the committee, but stated she was willing to continue and was duly re-elected.

Environment secretary: The current incumbent Janet Hudson offered her resignation from the committee, but stated she was willing to continue and was duly re-elected.

All the above were proposed, seconded and, there being no other nominations, were duly elected.

The resignations from the officers met the requirements of the constitution for resignations.

7. Any other business.

The chairman thanked HBD Accountants for the help they had provided to the society, and everyone for their attendance and closed the formal part of the meeting at 8:45 pm, when the appropriate officers signed the society's accounts.

Society News

Subscriptions

Subs became due on 1st October. It is hoped that all members will renew their subscriptions, with cheques sent to the membership secretary (address on renewal form). Cash payments may be made at the farmers' market, or to the membership secretary or to the treasurer, Charles Davies, at 101 Church Rd, L25 6DB

Talks programme

The speakers planned for this year have been re-booked for similar dates in 2021, with a full list of the programme of talks, with all dates & times, in issue 357.

The first talk on **Thursday 18th February** will be well known local speaker & historian Ken Pye. He will be speaking on The History of Your Lost Village. If St Mary's hall is unavailable this talk will be online, a first for the Woolton Society. Members will be informed of all arrangements in good time.

Highlights of the programme are Marie Passey on the history of Duke Street in March; Elaine Allen on the history of the telephone box in April; Rob Kirby on the Dam Busters raid of 1943 in May; a quiz night in June; an outing in July; Chris Tigwell on the Rainhill Trials of 1829 in September; Stephen Guy on Forgotten Liverpool in October & the AGM in November.

Environment, Planning News & Applications

Please note, the development description is the one provided by the applicant/agent and is subject to change by a Planning Officer when the application is validated. The progress of each application can be checked online using the Planning Explorer at:

<http://www.liverpool.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/>

In the past few months the majority of planning applications in the L25 area have been for tree works & single storey extensions. Others of note are:

20F/1605 Menlove Car Sales on Vale Road L25 7SE. The application is for part 3/part 4 storey building with 31 apartments (but only 15 parking spaces) for over 55s. This will follow the demolition of the existing buildings. The lodge on Vale Road is to be converted into 2 apartments.

20PT/1407 outside Othello's restaurant at 105 Gateacre Park Drive L25 1PD. The application is to install a 19m high 5G telecommunications mast with associated cabin equipment.

On October 15th Historic England published its *Heritage at Risk 2020* North West Register. Worryingly, Woolton Hall does not appear on the register, despite its Grade 1 listed status & very poor condition. This is an anomaly which will be pursued by the Woolton Society, which was formed in 1972 with the aim of saving the hall. More information will be in issue 357, out in January 2021.

Woolton News

Woolton in Bloom

Winter planting has now taken place, with volunteers working under the direction of Kerry Peacock.

The Open Gardens event planned for July was cancelled, & the gardens bloomed unseen. The very popular calendar has therefore the theme *Woolton's Hidden Gardens*. The calendar is on sale at the market, & also at Brown's newsagent on Woolton Street, priced at £5.

The supermarkets are not allowing charity days at their stores, but WIB will be allowed to set up a stall at Sainsbury's entrance opposite the dolphin lamp on November 28th, restrictions permitting. Residents have always supported WIB very generously as no funding is received from the city council.

The Christmas tree

At the time of going to press there has yet to be a definite decision about the tree. The grand switch-on in the village centre by Father Christmas at the end of November has been a Woolton institution for many years. It is hoped that there will be a tree this year, though whether there will be any formalities, or elves in attendance, has yet to be decided.



THE WOOLTON SOCIETY

METHODS OF PAYMENT VIA YOUR BANK

Details for setting up a standing order directly with your bank or making a bank transfer payment (BACS):

Bank details: Barclays Bank, 29 Allerton Road, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 7RD

Payee name: The Woolton Society

Sort code: 20-50-82

Account number: 50868930

Reference: Please enter your **Woolton Society membership number** as the reference with your bank. ***This is very important to enable us to identify you from our bank statements.*** Your membership number can be found in emails from the Woolton Society or in any letters you have received from the society. **New members can email the membership secretary at membership@wooltonociety.org.uk or ring 0151 428 1501 to obtain a membership number.**

Standing order payments should be set up for a payment 'now' and then annually on 1st October each year until further notice.

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Gift Aid Declaration

The Woolton Society - Registered charity no. 506224

Please treat all gifts/subscriptions of money that I have made to the Woolton Society in the past 6 years and all future gifts of money that I make from the date of this declaration as Gift Aid donations.

Donor's details: Title First name Surname

Home address

.....**Postcode**

Date **Signature**

The Woolton Society will be able to reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 you give on or after 6 April 2015.

Please notify the Treasurer of The Woolton Society if you: want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay tax on your income, pensions or/and capital gains.

Please note that you must pay an amount of Income Tax (this can be tax on pensions, incomes or savings) and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the charity will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year

If you pay income tax at the higher rate, you should include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return if you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you.

*Please return the Gift Aid form to: The Membership Secretary,
The Woolton Society, 11 Manor Way, Woolton, Liverpool L25 8QY*