



Wiltshire Local History Network

Meeting
Wednesday 19 July 2023, 7.30pm
Online via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Julie Davis (Chair), Naomi Sackett (WSHC), Terry Bracher (WSHC), Stuart Raymond, Tim Couzens, John Chandler, Ann Goodyear, Tony Pratt, James Holden, Jean, Nick Baxter, David Dawson, John Mills, James W, Tina Richards

Apologies: Stephen Stacey, Dr Jane Howells, Gillian Swanton, Ruth Newman, Ally McConnell, Brian Edwards

A thank you for coming and to David Dawson, Wiltshire Museum for hosting with the preferred Zoom platform.

1. Actions from previous meeting

Julie was to create a promotional piece about the Network. Julie consulted James Holdren and the VCH will also be promoted at the same time. The next job is to send out to parish councils. Gillian Swanton sent Julie a contact for Upper Kennet Valley Parish magazine and news. Once the details of the conference are fully organised this will all be sent out. **Action Julie Davis**

marin

Conference – to be discussed.

Julie has put Tina Richards and Tim Couzens in contact regarding Eminent Tisburgers project.

2. Update from the Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre – Inclusion Panel

The first meeting of the new WSHC Inclusion Panel took place on Monday 17 July. There are 9 panel members, and for this meeting three attended in person, three online. Alongside Julie, WSHC staff Tom Plant, Ally McConnell and Naomi Oakley also attended and will be involved with the Panel. The meeting was a success, and it is a friendly group, with particular enthusiasm and thanks from one participant for creating the panel and all are keen to be involved in research. The aims and

objectives of the panel have initially been led by WSHC but in time the panel will design and lead its own development. The next meeting will be in a month.

3. Explore Wiltshire App – Terry Bracher, WSHC

Terry Bracher gave a presentation to introduce the new Explore Wiltshire app. This emerged from the Salisbury Trails app, which was launched just before Covid (instigated following Novichok to encourage people back to the city centre). It couldn't be promoted during Covid, and work began on the wider Explore Wiltshire app as it became possible to promote the Salisbury Trails app.

The Explore Wiltshire app is in its first phase. It is free to download, interactive and location aware so (with the relevant authorisation) it can buzz to alert you when passing a site of interest. The idea is to engage a new audience with heritage and cultural activities, get them out, active and having fun and to encourage them to stay in town centres longer: funding came from the market town programme grant.

The aim is to expand the app to cover more of the county. The content is being developed by the heritage service who going forwards will act as custodians, with content and trails also contributed by local town councils and groups.

When the app is downloaded and opened there is a welcome message from Phil Harding, you can read about the app, and do a walk-through of how to use it. You will find a holding page listing all the places currently covered listed (Bradford-on-Avon, Chippenham, Cricklade, Devizes, Salisbury, Warminster) as well as those to be added (Marlborough, Pewsey, South West Wiltshire (Tisbury and Wilton) and Trowbridge) with other towns and villages hopefully to be added. Each town can be downloaded and then removed when finished so it does not take up data on the phone. As more towns and villages are added a new way of displaying may be needed to prevent an overlong list.

There is a welcome screen for each town where town councils can add marketing messages. This can be updated (the content management system only takes 2-3 hours up upload a new message) so a particular event or festival can be promoted.

With the app permission set to allow it, you can wander around the town centre without needing to follow a particular trail and the app will alert you when passing a site of interest. It can also alert to advertise local events and activities.

The sites of interest are listed (display can be personalised) with the site closest to you geographically at the top of the list. You can also filter by category (there are currently only broad categories for 'heritage' (building) or 'landmark' (e.g. a place where event of interest occurred) - feedback on categories welcome.

You can choose from different trails and follow using different views (standard map, aerial view, hybrid map) according to preference. There are audio clips and video clips such as a 1936 clip of Market Square, Devizes (which takes you out of the app to the History Centre You Tube Channel Explore Wiltshire playlist) from Windrose Media Trust who we work with to digitise film.

There are family trails and hunts to encourage looking at the trail and sites in a different way, with fun quizzes.

There is an events calendar which it is hoped will be populated by town and ultimately parish councils.

The next step is to link further existing trails from more towns and move to villages. Recommendation is to download and have a play and explore.

Questions:

Ann Goodyear asked about Malmesbury's trail and Terry confirmed it is linked although it is not yet showing on the front page but should be back in next few days.

Julie Davis asked about what noise the alert makes: a buzz. She liked idea of hunts – Wiltshire Libraries could advertise. Suggested using a map to show all places covered by the app and avoid a long list? Terry confirmed the feature is already there and could be utilised for this.

James Holden: A couple of village trails emerged from VCH Vol 20: Bremhill and Langley Burrell. Questioned what steps are taken to ensure the integrity of the information added to the app if it is to be opened up to more contributors? Terry confirmed that there are four WSHC staff with ability to publish who will moderate content and ensure due diligence before it goes live – any content can be added by users with logins, edited, drafted and previewed but can't be published. Terry also thought links could be made to other trails that already existed (depending on the quality of these).

Tom Couzens: Highlighted that the Sutton Benger trail went live recently. Emphasised the sensitivity and consideration required for residents when certain buildings are featured on app are highlighted. Terry acknowledges this is a good point, particularly for small villages.

Julie: all should feel free to email with questions or comments.

4. WLHN conference

Topic: "Bread or Blood": Social Protest and Unrest in Wiltshire

Date: Saturday 23 September

Venue: Rowdefield Farm Training and Education Centre just outside Devizes, SN10 2JE [Has parking] (Bromham Social Centre venue originally considered was destroyed following a fire in 2021)

Time: 10am-3pm

Plan for the day is currently keynote speaker Steve Poole speaking on 'Chartism and Rural England' and talk by Nick Baxter on 'The Strange Death of Marlborough Workhouse'.

Julie posed question whether a third talk was needed? Agreed it was best to have a third talk. John Chandler noted he was about to publish a book on the Pythouse riots by Tina Richards. In the publication Tina looks at the uprising connected to the swing riots, where the parties were transported to Tasmania, she finds out where they were transported to and what they did, what happened after they were convicted? Tina agreed to do add a talk on the book to the programme.

Julie asked whether people thought we should charge for tickets, free for members but charge for non-members (encourage people to join). There is a pot of money from the Wiltshire Local History Forum so the charge could go towards a future conference.

Attendees will need to bring their own lunch, but refreshments will be provided.

Tina Richards: free to members of history societies and donation if not? Don't want to put people off but seems to make sense to encourage people to join.

David Dawson: a small charge helps to know the number of people coming and make it more likely that they will come.

Terry Bracher agrees that a charge makes a commitment.

Nick Baxter: we would want to encourage anyone to come, if you ask for donations most people will pay it. Tempted to ask for donations and then at least there is some money coming in.

Julie Davis: when running Local History Month events she found the free events were fully booked while attendance was poor for the charged events. Maybe cost of living is a factor. We would want more than a handful of people for the keynote.

Put to a vote: 11 of 15 voted in favour of free with donations.

Question about the facilities at Rowdefield: Julie confirmed they are an education facility and have all the necessary equipment. Julie with double check what there is and get details to speakers. **ACTION Julie**

Promotion – will arrange to go out. **ACTION Julie and Naomi**

Consideration had been given to making it a hybrid conference, but Julie feels it is perhaps too ambitious and optimistic for this first conference. The room can seat 40-50 people which is about the level the Forum used to attract, and it would be better to make this one a success and perhaps try it for any future conference. Naomi cannot attend the date of the conference and so isn't able to support using the technology this time.

5. Group information share – a chance for members to discuss their work or ask questions

Update from Jean Belt, Purton Historical Society:

- 1 Purton Historical Society members enjoyed 2 talks in the spring. The first on The Lydiard Archives was given by Sarah Finch-Crisp, an old friend of the PHS.
- 2 In May another popular speaker, Bill King, spoke about the Roman Invasion, Occupation and Colonisation of Britain.
- 3 On 17th June a group visited Marlborough where Nick Baxter led some members on a very informative tour of the town while the others climbed the tower of St Peter's Church for a splendid view in perfect conditions.
- 4 A guided walk organised by Joe Wright explored a section of the former Bradon Forest boundary at Cricklade, as it existed in the 13th century. This evening event took place on 1st July.
- 5 The "Purton at Leisure" Exhibition can be viewed in the Museum which is open on Saturday mornings from 10.00am until 12.30pm. Displays by Purton Age Concern and the WI have been added recently.
- 6 The autumn season of talks begins on 28th September when Dr Gill White's subject is "Portraits of Queen Elizabeth 1".
- 7 The PHS Bulletin number 45 will be on sale in September. We hope members will give copies to their families and friends for Christmas!

Terry Bracher: a request for anyone to consider for submitting for Alan Ball awards for local history publications. There are three categories: Print publication – for best hardcopy publication; E-publication – for best digital publication (e-books, journals, websites or virtual exhibitions, blogs and apps; Community Award – for best community publication in either category. In the past there have been Wiltshire winners and runners up, and there has always been a good contribution from Wiltshire. John Chandler and Terry are both on judging panel and have to stand down for Wiltshire submissions, but there are plenty of judges to assess on their behalf. The publication must be published in 2022 (to end of December) and submit by the end of February 2024.

Stuart Raymond: request for new Wiltshire publication to get sent to Stuart as reviews editor for WAM. If anyone knows of any books coming out would be interested to know about them. Secondly, he recently went to Stourhead and found they are looking for the old castle just outside of Stourhead house. He queried if anyone knew anything about it? David Dawson informed that it is part of Festival of Archaeology “Dig for Stourton Castle” - Martin Papworth and David will be giving an online talk on Thurs 27 July “Richard Colt Hoare and the discovery of Stourton Castle, the House before Stourhead”. Booking on the Wiltshire Museum website [ONLINE LECTURE: Richard Colt Hoare and the discovery of Stourton Castle, the House before Stourhead - Wiltshire Museum](#)

Nick Baxter: in midst of Marlborough summer school events which are fully booked.

Tina Richards, Tisbury History Society: Talks have going on until June, including a talk about Wardour chapel and an organised visit. Ann Martin took group to the Odeon in Salisbury with a conducted tour behind the scenes of the medieval building. They also had a tour of the Cathedral stone mason yard. Tina continues to work on the community history: people in the community writing about the community (someone they are interested in who has national profile) which they are calling ‘Tisburgers’. She has 20 people writing about 30 different pieces. There are many Tisbury connected people with national profiles including John Bradshaw, most notable for his role as President of the High Court of Justice for the trial of Charles I leading to his execution. A lot of interesting people, mostly dead (a couple still alive including the Fiennes family who they have requested permission to write about). It will be a project for the next six months. It has been great to support local enthusiasm and people learning more about their community.

James Holden, VCH: – nothing significantly new. They have republished a promotional leaflet for VCH and trying to get out as widely as possible. If anyone would like copies for group contact James and he can send out. 2000 copies gone to WSHC. Julie asked if they would like copies in libraries? James will decide whether want to go to libraries, but certainly would like them to go to local history societies.

Anne Trevett, Bemerton Local History Society: Silver Salisbury (programme organised by older people’s champion designed to get older people, the lonely and isolated into the community). They have a successful history talks programme with number of 40-60 for audience. This will be running again this year. Frog Moody (who has a piece in Salisbury Journal on local history) will do something about City Hall (a hot topic in Salisbury at moment). Adrian Green will talk about what’s happening behind the scaffolding at the Museum (King’s House is currently covered in scaffolding) and people are curious about what re-opening will be like following a £7.8 million refurbishment. They also use these talks as way of launching of history club meetings in Salisbury Library, an afternoon at which someone will do a short presentation, but it is about getting people out and about – interest in local history is

a great way of doing that. Julie added that Philip at Salisbury is very keen, which is brilliant.

David Dawson: along with Salisbury they have now heard that they have been awarded development funding for assize court development of £11.6 million. In the meantime, they are continuing as normal with events: online VCH talks and a series of talks coming up (including Mystery of the Wansdyke by Alex Langlands in September where he discusses [LECTURE: The Mystery of Wansdyke - Wiltshire Museum](#)). There are a series of walks (fully booked). Julie asked about the funding timeframe: it will take two years to get to the planning submission stage with funding in stages, a long way to go but they are on the way. Opening 2030 if goes to plan.

6. Suggested date of next meeting

3 months time. Happy with online format. Conference in person in September and then the next meeting in Oct.