

**Minutes of the THIRTY SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BISHOP'S WALTHAM SOCIETY
held via Zoom at 7.30 pm on 18th February 2021**

Chairman Tony Kippenberger welcomed members to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The number of screens joining the Zoom call was 45 which gives an approximate figure of 72 members attending – Tony commented on how delighted he and the Trustees were to see so many members participating in this way.

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Robin Shepherd and Fred Woodfine.

MINUTES of the 35th AGM having been circulated to members via email and post, together with the agenda and voting forms; Tony Kippenberger reminded participants that the 2020 AGM was the last time we'd met in the Church Hall because within a month of that meeting the whole country was in lockdown. Tony confirmed that no-one had raised any queries on the Minutes but those who have attended previous AGMs will know that since Paul Emmerson's name had been misspelt, we've been running a competition to see who can spot the incorrectly spelled name – last year was Robin Shepherd and this year it was Tony himself!

The motion that "The minutes of the 35th AGM are a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting" had been voted on, both electronically and by postal vote. It was proposed by Mike Rainey and seconded by Judith Wiltshire with votes in favour at 65 and votes against, nil. Tony said he was delighted at the number of people who had voted for all motions and said again how heartening it was to see the level of members' involvement.

MATTERS ARISING from the minutes: there were no matters arising.

ADOPTION OF THE TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR 2020 having been circulated to members with the AGM papers: Tony Kippenberger wanted to record with great sadness the death of our friend and President for the last 9 years, Alan Inder. Many members will have known Alan, who was a founder member of the Society in the 1980s and was a very active member of the community for many years. A full tribute will appear in our next newsletter and on our website.

Tony highlighted the need to continue to recruit new members, and encouraged existing members to invite friends and neighbours to sample a talk or visit our website.

Tony said he wanted to thank the Trustees, all volunteers giving their time and enthusiasm freely. In that context we were very sorry to lose Pauline Mousley and Colin Palma, both of whom had contributed a lot to the society. We are keen to attract new Trustees, particularly anyone with an interest in, or knowledge of, Planning, but we also want other Trustees with a variety of interests. Tony said this is his 10th year as Chairman and he is keen to try and bring in new people who want to take the Society into the future. If anyone is interested, they should contact Tony by phone or email in the first instance to arrange an informal chat.

Tony had received two questions from John Hayter in relation to the Trustees' Report; the first was "What is the number of individual members in 2018 and 2019 because the subs show a slight decline". Tony responded that in terms of membership, the highest number of individual members (which of course varies during the year) was 315 in 2018, 345 in 2019 and 341 in 2020. As the Trustees' report says, without public meetings during 2020 it was difficult to recruit new members to replace those lost through natural attrition.

The second question from John was "What is the largest attendance in the hall?" The highest recorded number attending a Society meeting at the Church Hall in 2019 was 78 (which happened at two meetings). Three other meetings had attendances of more than 70 people.

John Hayter also proposed that for future meetings, a mix of physical presence alongside digital Zoom meetings (for those who'd rather stay at home) was a possibility. Tony said that the Trustees were very alert to the unfolding nature of a COVID dominated future, discussing this issue as we planned this year's speakers, and continuing to do so. Tony assured members that we would continue to stay in touch regarding future meetings and that we wouldn't do anything which would go against the various rules and regulations. Our arrangement with the Church Hall reflects this. We had booked our usual slot for the third Thursday of each month throughout the year and the agreement is that any dates we cannot attend because of restrictions are carried forward to next year. This secures our third-Thursday 'spot' and helps them with cash flow. In the meantime, the Zoom meetings seemed to be working well and would continue for the foreseeable future.

The adoption of the Trustees' Report was proposed by Gareth Morgan and seconded by Susan Tatton-Brown, with votes in favour at 72 and votes against, nil.

ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REPORT: The Treasurer's report had been circulated to members with the AGM papers. The Treasurer, Keith Fry, said he wished to reinforce Tony's comments as regards the continued loyalty of members.

No comments or queries having been received, the adoption of the financial report was proposed by Mike Boyd and seconded by Jenny Williams, with votes in favour at 72 and votes against, nil.

AGREEMENT TO THE CONTINUATION OF EXISTING OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES IN OFFICE: Tony Kippenberger commented that in the absence of a face-to-face meeting at which the Officers and Trustees could stand for re-election, it was proposed that the current Officers and Trustees remain in office until the 2022 AGM. All have agreed to do so. This motion was proposed by Sarah Berry and seconded by Emma McKenzie, with votes in favour at 72 and votes against, nil.

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXAMINER OF THE SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS: Keith Fry reminded members that technically we do not need to appoint an examiner because our turnover doesn't exceed £25,000, but the Trustees take the view that it is appropriate and prudent for an independent examination to take place. Keith thanked Paul Emmerson for his work on the accounts and said Paul has confirmed he is prepared to remain as examiner. The motion to re-appoint Paul as Examiner was proposed by Martin Wiltshire and seconded by Pat Morris, with votes in favour at 69 and votes against, nil.

MEMBERS' FORUM – ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Tony confirmed there had only been one item, raised by John Hayter. John commented that in the South African variant virus areas, where surge testing was being carried out, the names of thousands of possible volunteers were obtained from local organisations, provoking data protection questions. He wished to propose that a motion: "In the event that the government has broadcast a national emergency for the Winchester City Council area, two or more immediately available Trustees are empowered to send them the name and contact address of all members" should be put to the meeting seconded by a Trustee or member. The Trustees discussed John's proposal but had responded to him that in terms of such an emergency being declared, the Trustees would follow the same arrangements as in April 2020, which was to immediately inform members of a request for volunteers, explain exactly what would be required and appoint a Trustee as volunteer co-ordinator. The Trustees didn't feel it appropriate to hand over all the information held on members without first informing them what it was about.

CLOSING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN: The Chairman reminded members that two years ago the decision had been made to hypothecate the Gift Aid we receive to local charities that we wished to support. This year was difficult because all charities have been affected by the COVID situation, but we have chosen to support two who have a presence in Bishop's Waltham and where support by residents has been severely impacted, namely Rowans Hospice (whose income has been reduced by 50%) and Revitalise (whose income has been reduced by 60%). Both have sought to continue their charitable work despite this income loss. The trustees therefore feel they deserve our support this year.

Tony referred to the discussion at last year's AGM regarding an increase in subscriptions, due to come into effect in 2021. The Trustees had discussed this at the end of 2020 and agreed that the increase would not be implemented this year, although they would be likely to put this in place for 2022. It would mean moving from £7 to £10 for single membership and from £12 to £16 for joint membership (the first increase since 2013).

Tony commented that the Parish Council plan to purchase the red telephone box currently located in Hoe Road and they are keen to move this to Red Lion Street and turn it into a tourist information centre with leaflets and maps for visitors. They had approached the Society for a donation and the Trustees had agreed, the amount to be decided. It was felt that this was something members may also wish to contribute to, so the Society may make contact with members to ask for donations as part of a fund-raising campaign.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for voting – it is very encouraging to the Trustees to see the number of members actively participating at this difficult time.

After the AGM members enjoyed a presentation by Barry Shurlock of Hampshire Archives Trust on "Stories from the Archives".