

**Minutes of the THIRTY NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BISHOP'S WALTHAM SOCIETY  
held in the Catholic Church Hall, Martin Street at 7.30pm on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

Chairman Robin Shepherd welcomed members to the meeting and commented that it was nice to see so many people attending the AGM. He confirmed that he has now completed the year as Chairman he had agreed to, but more on that later.

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Sue Lowe, Vicky Cronin, Robin and Chris Breech, Ian Leesmith, and Debbie Crump.

MINUTES of the 38th AGM having been circulated to members with the agenda; there were no comments so Robin suggested that the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. Proposed by Gareth Morgan and seconded by Alison McNally.

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

ADOPTION OF THE TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR 2023 having been circulated to members with the agenda: Robin Shepherd asked whether anyone had any comments but none were raised. The adoption of the Trustees' Report was proposed by Tony Kippenberger and seconded by Steve Forrest.

ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REPORT: The Treasurer, Keith Fry, referred to the financial report and statement of account circulated with the Agenda and asked whether anyone had any comments. The only query came from Nick Whitehead who asked when the Gift Aid payment is received, how much this would be? Keith confirmed it will be around £500. The adoption of the financial report was proposed by Ann Riches and seconded by Margaret Pilling.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Robin Shepherd confirmed that he is prepared to continue in the role of Chairman for a further year, which was warmly welcomed by all. He hopes during this time that a new Chairman can be found and asked attendees to please consider the role themselves or perhaps they knew someone who would be able to take this on. In either case, please contact Robin for further details. The proposal for Robin to remain as Chairman was agreed nem con.

The role of Vice Chairman remains vacant although Robin said he is hoping that an existing trustee, or perhaps a new trustee, will take on that position, not least because it means the person could then take on the role of Chairman next year.

Robin Shepherd commented that after many years, Keith Fry has decided to step down as Treasurer and a Trustee. A new Trustee, Teresa Pratt, has been appointed to fill the role of Treasurer and she and Keith have met to have a handover. Robin said he would like to use this meeting to formally appoint Teresa as a Trustee and Treasurer – this appointment was proposed by Ann Riches and agreed by Keith Fry. Agreed nem con.

Robin Shepherd confirmed that Eileen Rainey had stepped down from role as Secretary last August and that currently the position remains vacant. He said he has been taking the Minutes of the Trustees meetings himself but is looking for someone to take on the role, so again if anyone in the audience would like to consider this themselves or knows of anyone who might be interested to please get in touch.

ELECTION OF UP TO EIGHT TRUSTEES: Robin commented on the sad loss of Nigel Russell who had joined as a Trustee at last year's AGM.

He confirmed the existing Trustees – Sandra Boyd, Sue Lowe, Mike Berry, Steve Forrest, Tamsin Withers and Tony Kippenberger (who is President of the Society as well as being a Trustee) - have all agreed to continue. Robin suggested that these were proposed and seconded en bloc – proposed by Tricia Morgan, seconded by Rupert Johnson; agreed nem con. Robin then confirmed that there has been a new Trustee appointment, Grace Cox – proposed by Tamsin Withers, seconded by Steve Forrest and agreed nem con.

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXAMINER OF THE SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS: Robin asked Paul whether he is happy to continue in the role of Examiner and Paul confirmed he is.

**HYPOTHECATION OF GIFT AID:** Keith explained that each year, the Society receives an amount of money as a Gift Aid payment – this represents a refund by the Government of the tax paid by members on their subscriptions (it costs members nothing to sign up to Gift Aid). He reminded members that five years ago the Trustees had proposed that rather than this money simply going into the Society’s general account, it should be used for donations to good causes. The members having agreed that proposal, we have each year since then paid the money to various local organisations. Robin said that last year’s Gift Aid payment of £400 had been donated to the Meon Valley Food Bank and the proposal is to do the same with this year’s payment, when it is received.

Robin also confirmed that over the past year the Society has made donations totalling £1,600 to four local charities/community groups. This money comes from members’ subscriptions as well as donations and he added that it is the Society’s intention to do the same again this year. He thinks this is a good use of the Society’s funds rather than simply building up a large amount in the bank account. All agreed.

**MEMBERS’ FORUM – ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** Keith Fry said he would like to take the opportunity to reiterate the remarks he’d made in his Treasurer’s Report. He genuinely feels that it has been both a privilege and a pleasure to have been a Trustee and Treasurer for over 10 years, working with some wonderful people and having lots of laughs. He added he wanted to thank everyone for their support and for laughing at his jokes!

Tony Kippenberger said that Hampshire County Council are looking to make savings of around £120 million from their budget and are currently carrying out a consultation on their proposals. One of these relates to the closure of the BW Household Waste Recycling Centre and Tony confirmed that the Society are working on a response which will be submitted to the Council. He commented that whilst completing the online consultation response himself he had found that one of the maps used by the Council was incorrect as regards the locations of other Household Waste Recycling Centres. He said that having told the Council about the error, within 48 hours this had been corrected. Tony suggested that if members had already completed the consultation, they may wish to do so again because of the change in circumstances.

Tony said he wanted to highlight some correspondence recently received by Keith Fry as Treasurer. It was a note from a long-standing member, Fred Butter, who lives in Southwold, Suffolk. During Covid, the Society held their monthly meetings on Zoom which had enabled Fred to join. He had sent Keith a cheque and a note saying “Keith – I am now 81 years old and pay for Life Membership. Covid brought Zoom and I saw and enjoyed being part of your enjoyable meetings”. Tony said he thought it was wonderful that Fred was applying for Life Membership at the age of 81!

**CLOSING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN:** Robin confirmed that he wanted to thank Keith – he said it’s been a lot of fun and Keith has done a superb job keeping the accounts and maintaining the membership details, as well as being an excellent prop at the Christmas parties!

Robin also wanted to thank Sandra Boyd who is relinquishing her role as Meetings Co-ordinator. In addition to arranging all the monthly speakers, Sandra has been key to arranging the Christmas Parties and refreshments at the AGMs. He is delighted to say however that Sandra is remaining as a “Trustee without portfolio” and will continue to contribute to the Society.

Both Keith and Sandra received thanks and applause from the members. Robin said at the last Trustees’ meeting, on behalf of members he had given both Keith and Sandra a gift to thank them for all their hard work and support over the many years they’ve been involved with the Society.

Robin then thanked the audience for being members and said he thought the Society is good and does good things. He commented that evidence of this is the posters on the hoardings at Malt Lane showing the history of Bishop’s Waltham – he said that every time he passes there are always a number of people reading them.

He thanked the existing Trustees for continuing with their roles and said he would like to reiterate the commitment to finding new Trustees, again asking if any members can help in this regard to please do so. This will ensure the Society continues into 2025, 2026 and beyond.

After the AGM members enjoyed cheese and wine. This was followed by a brief presentation by Robert Shields on the work of the Town Team, then a talk by Nick Whitehead of the Bishop’s Waltham Museum Trust on “How we belong; Society and Community”.