

**Minutes of the THIRTY FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the BISHOP'S WALTHAM SOCIETY
held in the Church Hall, Free Street at 7.30 pm on 20th February 2020**

Chairman Tony Kippenberger welcomed members to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Sarah & Mike Berry, Chris & Robin Breach, Jenny Cuttriss, Tricia & Gareth Morgan, Robin Shepherd, May Martin, Debbie Crump, Pauline Mousley, Barry Longmuir, Amina Cleal, Heather Pollard and Ann & Dennis Howe.

MINUTES of the 34th AGM having been circulated to members with the agenda; Tony Kippenberger reminded attendees of the "spot the incorrectly spelled name competition" and said this year Robin Shepherd's name had been mis-spelled! Apart from this error, the minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

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

ADOPTION OF THE TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR 2019 having been circulated to members with the agenda: Tony Kippenberger asked whether anyone had any comments but none were raised.

Tony asked existing members to continue to promote membership of the Society. He said that although we have good attendance at our meetings, we need to go on recruiting new members. Anyone who is interested can come along to a meeting free of charge and can then decide whether to join. He referred to the programme of talks for this year, a copy of which had been placed on each seat. He said further copies are available so members should feel free to give this to anyone who may be interested in joining us. He confirmed that details of all the talks are also available on our website (www.bishopswalthamsociety.org.uk).

Tony Kippenberger reminded attendees that at last year's AGM it had been agreed we should hypothecate the Gift Aid we receive. He said that £1.2 bn is handed back to charities every year as Gift Aid and the majority of this is simply put back into general pools of money with no particular advantage attached. BWS had decided that we would donate our Gift Aid to local charities we think would benefit from our support. Last year we split this between the Mini-bus group and the Gateway Club and this year we are looking at Meon Valley Home-Start, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Bishop's Waltham in Bloom and North Pond Conservation Group. We cannot support all of these from the Gift Aid, but we will try and find other resources from our funds. He said that Alan Inder has for the moment paused in his book writing, so we are back to subscriptions and Gift Aid as our main sources of income. Sales of our existing books are ticking over slowly, but are not anywhere near the levels of income that we had when they were first launched. Tony said that he will raise later in the meeting the matter of subscription costs.

The adoption of the Trustees' Report was proposed by Moira Dean and seconded by John Riches.

ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REPORT: The Treasurer, Keith Fry, commented that members will have noticed the Minutes for last year's meeting were in very small print so as to squeeze them onto one page – this is in an attempt to reduce the amount of paper we use which all agreed was a good idea.

He referred to the financial report and statement of account circulated with the Agenda and asked whether anyone had any comments, but none were raised. He said he wanted to draw attention to the fifth paragraph which talks about our core income and core expenditure. We run a surplus but this includes our reserve, which sum could be used to run the society for a year if we received no income. After taking that into account, the fund for supporting local groups is relatively small.

KF thanked Paul Emmerson for his examination of the accounts. He said that we had not published the whole report as the Charity Commission has decided that if a charity's gross income is less than £25,000, they do not need to have their accounts independently examined. However, the Society has decided it would be prudent for us to do so and we will continue on that basis.

The adoption of the financial report was proposed by Mike Boyd and seconded by Brian Lovedon.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Tony Kippenberger confirmed that there is still no Vice-Chairman in place, but that the other officers of the committee were all happy to stand for office again this year: Chairman Tony Kippenberger, Treasurer

Keith Fry and Minutes Secretary Eileen Rainey. Proposed by Chris Williams and seconded by Jane Gentry. Passed nem con.

ELECTION OF UP TO EIGHT TRUSTEES: Tony Kippenberger said that Pat Morris is stepping down as a Trustee and he was very sorry to see her go, but he was delighted that Colin Palma had joined this year. Fred Woodfine, Robin Shepherd, Sandra Boyd, Anita Taylor and Pauline Mousley are all prepared to stand again. Proposed by Jenny Williams and seconded by Peter Ewence.

APPOINTMENT OF THE EXAMINER OF THE SOCIETY'S ACCOUNTS: Keith Fry thanked Paul Emmerson for his work on the accounts and said Paul has confirmed he is prepared to remain as examiner. Proposed by Ian Leesmith and seconded by Alan Inder.

MEMBERS' FORUM – ANY OTHER BUSINESS: Tim Wills raised the matter of the library review currently being undertaken by HCC and said that eight libraries across the county are earmarked for closure. He referred to the invitation to the public to complete a comments form and added that his eight years' as a senior manager in the library service showed him that although all comments would be looked at, what really matters is user numbers. He encouraged members to visit the library as often as possible as there is a "people counter" just inside the door, plus of course to borrow items. He said it is the number of users that HCC will look at when making their final decisions.

Tony Kippenberger said he wanted to thank those who had followed up on the Society's recent email about the car parking consultation being conducted by WCC. He felt this was worth doing and the Society had a very good response to their email, as did the Town Team. He said there had been around 350/400 responses from Bishop's Waltham in the last three days of the consultation.

Tony then raised the issue of the subscriptions and said they have been at the same level since the last increase in 2013. The Society has a relatively conservative policy which means that we hold in reserve enough money to run the Society for a year without any income. We don't want to eat into that reserve, but we do want to continue helping other groups in the community. He said when the Society was formed in the 1980s, the age profile of the members was younger and they undertook a lot of community work themselves, eg tree planting. However, that profile has changed so we want to support others who are doing that sort of work. He said that although final figures had not been decided, did members feel it was reasonable to raise the subs from £7 and £12 to, say, £10 and £16? There was no formal show of hands, but the general agreement was this didn't sound unreasonable. Tony said the Trustees would progress this and come forward with proposals.

CLOSING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN: The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for their input to the meeting. He added that he wanted to give special thanks to all the distributors for delivering the newsletters and other papers. He said this is an essential task and the Society is very grateful to everyone who does this.

Moira Dean said on the issue of distribution, she is trying not to use plastic bags and asked whether it was necessary for bags to be used to deliver the newsletters to the distributors. Fred Woodfine said the bags are used simply to ensure that the distributors receive the correct numbers of documents – if they wanted to, distributors were welcome to put the bags through his letterbox and he would re-use them.

Another member, who lives out of the area and so receives her newsletters by post, asked whether it would be possible for these to be sent via email, thus saving paper, stationery and postage costs. Keith Fry said yes, but he'd found that paper copies tend to be read whereas email versions sometimes get left in inboxes without being seen! It was agreed that the member would speak with Keith after the meeting to request her copy be sent via email only.

After the AGM members enjoyed cheese and wine and this was followed by a presentation by Audrey Brown of Waltham Ramblers on the work they do helping maintain the local footpaths.