



## **BERKSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

Registered Charity 1097355.

President: Professor E.J.T. Collins, B.A. Ph.D.

### **Minutes of the 39th Annual General Meeting of the Berkshire Local History Association held at Southmoor Village Hall, Southmoor, Oxfordshire, OX13 5BY, on Saturday, 12th March 2016.**

**Attendance:** President: Professor Ted Collins in the Chair (EJTC). Vice-Presidents: Brian Boulter (BB), Joan Dils (JD). Officers: David Cliffe (DC) Chairman, Ann McCormack (AMcC) Secretary (outgoing), David Lewis (DL) Treasurer. Members of the Executive Committee: Jonathan Brown (JB) Journal Editor, Sue Burnay (SB), Berkshire Bibliography, John Chapman (JC) Newsletter Editor, Elias Kupfermann (EK), Margaret Simons (MS). There were approximately 55 individual and society members.

**NOTE:** To facilitate a shorter meeting, Committee Reports were made available in advance on the website and were presumed read. Hard copies were also provided to the meeting, and are attached to Minutes. During the meeting, committee members took questions or comments on their respective reports.

The meeting was chaired by the President, Prof Ted Collins.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** Amanda Harvey (AH) Membership Secretary (outgoing), Dave Osborne (DO), Web Designer, Sue Viner (Mills Archive), Denise Wilkins (Twyford & Ruscombe).
- 2. Minutes of the AGM held 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015:** The Minutes of the last AGM, having been circulated, were approved.
- 3. Matters Arising:** There were none.

**ITEMS 4 – 12: Committee Reports** – circulated in advance and taken as read.

- 4. Secretary's Report:** No questions. AMcC will stand down as Secretary but is willing to remain on the committee and support an incoming Secretary.
- 5. Treasurer's Report:** (a) DL reported that finances remain stable. The major event, a Symposium, last year resulted in additional expenditure of £1,100. Income was £1,800. (b) he reminded the membership of the restricted funds held to assist with research and publication and invited discussion and application.
- 6. Journal Editor's Report:** EJTC congratulated JB on the excellent production. JB reported that the symposium papers would be published in June.

7. **Newsletter Editor's Report:** JC invited societies to submit even a little paragraph on their activities. EJTC noted that societies would receive excellent publicity as the Newsletter is published on BLHA website.
8. **Membership Secretary's Report:** No comments. AH not present. She will stand down after the June meeting as she will be moving out of the area.
9. **Website Designer's Report:** DO not present. Report delivered by DC. No questions.
10. **Report on Bibliography of Publications on Berkshire:** SB encouraged members to look at the online index, which has over 2,500 entries. Approximately half are completely indexed and help is required to continue the work.
11. **Chairman's Report:** DC commented on committee visits to local societies, some of which were 'historical' societies rather than 'local' societies. One happy result was that we were holding our 2016 AGM courtesy of Longworth & District. He thanked them for their hospitality. He explained that the Executive committee had been engaging in some soul-searching, following the discussions at those meetings, and wondered how to proceed and how to reach people who did not attend the AGM. There were no questions on his report.
12. **Discussion on future plans for the Association:** there was an animated and good-humourrf discussion in which the majority of those present participated.
  - a. **Newsletter – password protection:** the most recent edition is password-protected on the website, as a privilege for paid-up members. It was agreed that, to further promote our Association, the passport would be removed, making the current edition of the Newsletter available to the wider public.
  - b. **Newsletter – hard copies:** Some members of the Association receive the Newsletter in electronic form only, which has resulted in substantial reduction in printing and postage costs. Further savings could be made by eliminating hard copies. Those who choose hard copy pay extra. There was substantial support to retain the option for hard copies. It was pointed out that hard copies would still need to be produced for libraries. At the moment, 84 members receive hard copies. It was suggested that the membership should be canvassed, via the Newsletter, to see any more would be willing to relinquish hard copy in favour of electronic only. However, this option will always be offered when membership is renewed.
  - c. **Events:** there was a lengthy discussion on a proposal to hold a symposium once a year in conjunction with the AGM. As this involves quite a lot of work, it was agreed this would be an occasional venture. The possibility of involving either nationally-known speakers and local speakers – or both – was considered. Phil Wood explained that Newbury District & Field Club hold a very popular day with 3 – 4 speakers and is open to the public. This was not advertised via the BLHA at the moment but would be of interest to our membership. Other ideas raised included, boat tours, visits to mills, study days on palaeography, taster sessions or workshops on computer skills for historians, such as hints and tips for spreadsheets or Powerpoint. Some of these ideas could be combined to make an interesting package for a day school. The committee will consider these options.

**13. Election of President:** EJTC thanked all the members of the Executive Committee for their contribution during the year. DC took the chair for the election of the President. Prof Collins was unanimously re-elected. DC explained that Prof Collins would like to stand down at the next AGM.

**14. Election of Vice-Presidents:** The re-election of Brian Boulter, Joan Dils, Peter Johnson and Margaret Yates was agreed unanimously. AMcC was unable to make contact with PJ, who has moved from Lakeside nursing home.

**15. Election of Officers:** AMcC wished to stand down as Secretary but was willing to remain on the committee. David Cliffe and David Lewis were unanimously re-elected as Chair and Treasurer.

**16. Election of Members of the Executive Committee:** AH is moving in the summer so will be standing down from the committee. Jonathan Brown, Sue Burnay, John Chapman, Elias Kupfermann, Dave Osborne, Margaret Simons. Dr David Axford has volunteered to join the Committee. He was unanimously elected.

**17. Election of Hon. Examiner of Accounts:** Dr Clive Burgess was elected Financial Examiner.

**18. Any other Business:** None.

Phil Wood of Newbury & District Field Club offered to hold the 2017 AGM at St Nicolas Church Hall, Newbury, the provisional date being on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

Flowers were presented to the outgoing Secretary, Ann McCormack.

The meeting then closed.

**ADDRESS:** Peter Keene gave a very interesting and illustrated talk on the varied activities undertaken by the local society and the many publications they have produced.

There followed a delicious lunch provided by Longworth & District Historical Society, during which members had the opportunity to view displays from local societies.

The afternoon was spent visiting nearby Kingston Bagpuize House, under the guidance of the owner. This was very entertaining and informative experience and resulted in much positive feedback from the membership. The day concluded with tea and homemade cake.