#

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**held on Tuesday 17 November 2020**

**as a Zoom Meeting**

Members Present

Committee Members:

Geoff Braddy (in the chair),

Linda Polley

Martin Peagam

Julie Tweedy

Val Harrison

Matt Falcus

Lee Firth

Jenny Braddy

Stephanie Green

Ian Stubbs
Stewart Ramsdale

Francine Marshall

Allan Wilby

Margaret Wilby
Paul Boden

John Little

Helen Robinson

Jim Robinson

 (making the meeting quorate).

#### Apologies for Absence

#### Apologies for absence were received from: Denice Partington, Peter Davison and Alison Brown

#### Chairman’s Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Society's A.G.M. for 2020. The coronavirus pandemic had presented difficulties for Local History Societies everywhere and the Cleveland and Teesside Society was no exception. On behalf of the Society, he thanked the Committee members for their efforts to keep things ticking over. He also thanked all those members who have kept faith with the Society.

The Chairman referred to the loss of Committee member Paul Stephenson, a dedicated researcher and the author of more than 20 books. He suggested that for members who are not able to get out much this year, historical research could be a rewarding way to pass the time. For those able to use the internet, there is a vast array of local history resources waiting to be discovered.

Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 6 April 2019 were received and approved as a true record.

# Matters Arising

None

Secretary’s Report for the year ended 31 December 2019

The Secretary, Martin Peagam, presented a report on the activities of the Society over the previous year, and highlighted some key issues:

The passage of time does not stop.

Following the dramatic events of the last ten months – in which a pandemic has changed lives dramatically – one may be forgiven for wondering if 2019 ever happened.

But it is one of the roles of a historian to record the past, so here goes.

After the excitement of the previous year, when the Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society celebrated its Golden Jubilee, it was almost inevitable that 2019 would seem quieter. Yet in truth the Society still delivered a lot of activities, and more importantly continued to develop so as to be responsive to the changing needs of its members.

The Golden Jubilee Year saw us hold a Golden Jubilee Celebration Meal, a Golden Jubilee Day School, hold a special Packett Prize Competition, publish three special editions of the Society’s bulletin, and begin the process of selecting and publicising fifty People, Events, Buildings, and Places of significance in the history of the area (all in addition to our usual activities) The excitement of the Golden Jubilee Year saw an increase in membership. And the year was rounded off by the CTLHS Newsletter being named ‘Newsletter of the Year’ by the British Association for Local History.

However, as we historians know, time stops for no one.

In 2019 we therefore continued to deliver a varied and interesting programme of talks, to publish newsletters and bulletins, and to develop our social media.

As at 31 December 2019 we had 260 paid-up members including 22 institutional members (by way of comparison, on 31 December 2018 there had been 272 Members, including 23 institutions and on 31 December 2017 there were 257 Members, including 24 institutions).

In the twelve months to 31 December 2019, we delivered five Saturday meetings, with ten speakers, supported the annual Elgee Memorial Lecture hosted this year by TAS (‘Durham and Dunbar: Scottish Soldiers at Palace Green’ – Richard Annis) and provided, in conjunction with Teesside University, a Day School.

The Society programme this year comprised:

* ‘Skinningrove: It’s Social Development due to Ironstone Mining and the Iron Industry’ - Colin Hart
* ‘Forensic Archaeology’ - David Dance
* ‘A Story: Dark Deeds, Deception and Discovery at Meynell Hall in the 17th Century’ - Geoffrey Taylor
* ‘Home Comforts. The Role of the Red Cross Auxiliary Hospitals in the North Riding 1914-1919’ - Eileen Brereton and Anne Wall
* Mulgrave: The Communities from Aislaby to Staithes near Whitby’ - Christiane Kroebel
* ‘The Refurbishment of Middlesbrough Town Hall’ - Neil Cooke
* ‘Discovering Paradise: Researching the History of Eryholme’ – Professor Tony Pollard
* ‘Munitions, Mergers and Military Imperatives: From World War I to ICI’ - Dr Michael Sutton

The Twenty-Second Joint Day School, held on Saturday 16 March 2019 at Teesside University, addressed ‘‘Enterprise and Initiative in Nineteenth Century Cleveland’, with papers being presented by Tony Nicholson, Gill Moore, Caroline Hardie, Malcolm Chase, David Taylor, and Martin Peagam.

There were also two guided walks: on 15 May 2019 a guided tour of Linthorpe Cemetery with Ian Stubbs took place to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the cemetery and on 12 June 2019 a guided tour of the refurbished Middlesbrough Town Hall took place.

The activities of the Society are coordinated by the Members of the Management Committee, ably steered by our Chairman, Geoff Braddy. The last year has seen some significant changes in the membership of the Committee.

At the 2019 AGM, Allan Wilby retired from the role of Programme Secretary, a role he had occupied for an amazing 37 years, and Margaret Wilby retired as Treasurer. Allan and Margaret were co-opted to the Committee to provide the benefit of their experience. Their places as Programme Secretary and Treasurer respectively were taken by Matt Falcus as and Julie Tweedy, who bring new, fresh ideas to their roles.

Like Allan and Margaret, Lee Firth, has served the Society for a long time. She has now been Membership Secretary for nineteen years, and she continues to bring to that role a diligent but friendly approach which is appreciated by all Members.

Last year we reported another retirement, that of Dorothy Thomson, who ensured that postal communications, including the Bulletin and Newsletter, were put together and despatched to Members. Following Dorothy’s retirement, Stephanie Green took over this very important task.

Val Harrison continues to edit and publish the Society bulletin ‘Cleveland History’ and we know that the publication, and the work behind it, are greatly appreciated by Members.

The Newsletter continues to be collated and edited by Jenny Braddy, our Newsletter Editor, and is well-received by Members.

The internet is an important communication tool that was not available fifty years ago: Martin Peagam and Matt Falcus continue to lead the Society’s Social Media Strategy. They have developed the web site to have a Members Only area, they maintain our Facebook page, and they publish and distribute a monthly digital bulletin ‘The Scroll’.

In addition to all those mentioned above, the Society has benefitted from the enthusiasm, expertise and ideas of other Committee Members – Ian Stubbs, Alison Brown, Paul Stephenson, Stewart Ramsdale, and Francine Marshall - steered and guided by our Chairman, Geoff Braddy, and Vice-Chairman, Linda Polley.

The first year after our Golden Jubilee was a busy one, and suggested that the Society is continuing to serve a need and to continually seek new ways of informing, educating and entertaining people about the local history of Cleveland and Teesside.

Little did we know at 31 December 2019 what the new year would bring.

There being no questions, the Secretary’s Report was accepted by those present at the meeting.

Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019

The Treasurer, Julie Tweedy, presented the audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019 (copy attached), highlighting:

1. The year ended 31 December 2018 showed an excess of expenditure over income of £1,232.03
2. The Society has £14,642.14 in bank accounts at the year end, of which £4,487.26 is in a restricted fund (so cannot be used for running costs of the society).
3. The financial position of the Society was constantly being reviewed, to ensure that actions necessary to ensure the financial sustainability of the Society are addressed.

The Financial Statements as presented were received and approved as a true record.

Amendment to the Constitution

The meeting received a proposal to amend the Constitution as regards the appointment of Auditors.

The demise of one of the Society’s two auditors had prompted some debate about whether we need two auditors, and what sort of people can be appointed to such a role.

The Constitution at present states that ‘Two auditors shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting’, but does not make any stipulations about what qualifications are needed by an auditor:

* The Constitution does not say that a Member of the Society cannot be an auditor.
* The Constitution does not say that a Member of the General Committee cannot be an auditor.
* The Constitution does not even say that the Treasurer or a signatory to the bank account cannot be an auditor.

The Charity Commission provides guidance of relevance.

The Cleveland & Teesside Local History Society is a charity which is not a limited company and whose income is less than £25,000 per year.

For such a charity, the advice of the Charity Commission is as follows:

'You don't need to have your accounts examined or audited unless your charity's governing document or the Charity Commission asks you to.'

However, the Committee believes that it is appropriate for the Society to have its accounts examined or audited, not least to demonstrate that the Treasurer and Committee are acting honestly and appropriately in the management of Society funds. The Committee also believe that we need to change the Constitution to address what are potential weaknesses in financial accountability and the independence of an auditor.

**Proposal**

The Committee recommend the following change to the Constitution:

*Audit / Examination of Accounts*

*A suitable, appropriately skilled person or persons shall be appointed at each Annual General Meeting to examine / audit the financial and membership records of the Society. Those appointed may be Society Members, Committee Members, or Officers, except that they shall not be signatories to the accounts or hold the position of either Treasurer or Membership Secretary.*

The meeting unanimously approved the amendment to the Constitution.

Election of Officers

The meeting received and considered nominations for Officers to serve the Society for one year from the date of the AGM.

Whilst the election for Chairman was taking place, the out-going Chairman stepped down whilst the matter was considered and the business of the meeting was conducted by the Secretary, Martin Peagam, with the consent of those present.

The following Members were duly elected:

Chairman - Geoff Braddy

(Nominated: Martin Peagam Seconded: Linda Polley)

Vice-Chairman - Linda Polley

(Nominated: Val Harrison Seconded: Ian Stubbs)

Hon Secretary – Martin Peagam

(Nominated: Stephanie Green Seconded: Linda Polley)

Hon. Treasurer – Julie Tweedy

(Nominated: Martin Peagam Seconded: Jenny Braddy)

Editor – Val Harrison

(Nominated: Linda Polley Seconded: Stephanie Green)

Programme Secretary – Matt Falcus

(Nominated: Paul Boden Seconded Lee Firth)

The Chairman noted that Val Harrison was now the longest serving Bulletin Editor.

Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee

The meeting received and considered nominations for Members to fill the eight positions available to Ordinary Members to serve on the Committee for one year from the date of the AGM.

The following Members were duly re-elected (all Nominated: Paul Boden Seconded: John Little)

Jenny Braddy
Alison Brown

Lee Firth;

Stephanie Green

Francine Marshall

Stewart Ramsdale;

Ian Stubbs

To fill the remaining vacant post, nominations were invited and received.

Larry Bruce (Nominated: Linda Polley Seconded: Stewart Ramsdale) was duly elected.

The meeting noted that Barry Harrison and Carol Cook were ex-officio members of the Committee.

The meeting noted that Allan Wilby and Margaret Wilby were co-opted members of the Committee,

Appointment of Auditors

The meeting received and considered a proposal for the appointment of

Ian Saul as auditor for both financial and membership records (Nominated: Julie Tweedy Seconded: Stephanie Green), and Ian Saul was duly appointed.

Any Other Business

The Chairman informed the meeting that no notification had been received of any other business to be considered.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.

Start of Meeting: 8.00pm

End of Meeting: 8.17pm