



THE FRIENDS
OF ABINGDON
CIVIC SOCIETY

**MINUTES OF THE 73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 29 JUNE 2017 IN THE UNICORN THEATRE**

There were 32 members present. Apologies for absence were received from Lorraine Atkins, Barbara Beach, Andrew Coker, Frank Debney, Carolyn King and Jill Wivell

1. **The Minutes of the 72nd Annual General Meeting** held on the 27 June 2016 were unanimously accepted as an accurate record of the meeting, and the Chairman signed them as such.
2. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2016 AGM:** None.
3. **Chairman's address:** the Chairman reported that activity levels had increased markedly in the last year. Now that we had a licence for civil ceremonies, we had more wedding bookings; we had introduced new events such as the Beer Festival and, jointly with Music at the Unicorn, the Jazz Festival, both of which had been very successful and are being repeated in 2017; Heritage Weekend had been badly affected by the weather, but the upside was that a lot of visitors spent a lot of time in our Buildings to keep dry and the 'Abingdon in the 1950s' exhibition was curated by our Archivist, Elizabeth Drury at Community FreeSpace attracted 1200 visitors over 6 days.

It had been a frustrating year for the Society's Civic team, who were campaigning for action on the three boarded-up buildings in the Conservation area. Latterly serious concerns had emerged about proposals for the historic Guildhall building.

The most exciting development however was the progress with the "Enhancement Project" – aimed at ensuring our Buildings remained safe and usable for future generations and improving the visitor experience. Much work had been done during 2016 to prepare for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant application and we had recently heard that we have been awarded a £68k "Resilient Heritage" grant to fund the professional work needed to prepare a proposal and an application for a larger grant to fund the project costs. There were no specific plans yet, but we will share them with members when they emerge.

4. **Annual Report for the year 2016:** The Executive's formal report had been provided to members. Its acceptance was proposed by Bobbie Nichols and seconded by Glynne Butt and was carried without dissent.
5. **Treasurers Report and Accounts:** these had been published on the website and circulated to those present. Income during the year at £65.7K showed an increase of £22.2K over 2015. There were increases in many areas of activity;

buildings hire was up over £12K; events Income increased by over £7 K. The Music for a Summer Evening fundraising event made a surplus of over £1 K.

Included in the total income are grants from various sources totalling over £6K which were received towards the running the Community Free Space and the Heritage Open Day. Life memberships were promoted during the year and raised £2.4K, although this impacted on annual membership fees which dropped slightly. Our Membership Secretary successfully made the Society's first ever Gift Aid claim and received £600. Donations were up over £1K and we received a legacy of £2K from the estate of the late Miss E. Aldworth.

Normal running costs of the Abbey Buildings were covered by income but, as in 2014 and 2015, the cost of capital and major revenue projects (totalling nearly £36K) turned a comfortable surplus into an operating deficit of £13.4K. £21.1K was spent on refurbishing the caretaker's cottage; £10.4K on electrical works; and £4.2K on timber works in the Long Gallery. We were fortunate in that we have currently sufficient reserves to cover urgent expenditure such as this, although this is not sustainable in the long run.

Phil Addison was thanked for acting as Independent Examiner for the accounts.

Acceptance of the report was proposed by Peter Clare and seconded by Joy McWhirter and was agreed without dissent.

- 6. Election of Officers:** the following had been nominated by Michael Matthews and seconded by Glynne Butt and were approved without dissent:

Chairman: Bryan Brown;
Treasurer: Bruce Hunt;

Vice Chairman: Kevin Senior;
Secretary: Hester Hand

- 7. Election of the Executive Council:** the following members, elected to serve until 2017, had indicated their willingness to stand for re-election: Rosemary Allan, Caroline Bullock and Peter Clarke. Elizabeth Drury did not wish to stand for re-election, although she had agreed to continue as the Society's archivist. This meant that there were vacancies for three more Council members: one nomination had been received, for Maggie Henderson-Tew. The election of Rosemary Allan, Caroline Bullock, Peter Clarke and Maggie Henderson-Tew was proposed by Olga Senior and seconded by Bobbie Nichols and there were no dissenters.

- 8. Any Other Business:** Jim Halliday asked whether the Friends would consult with local residents about future plans for the Buildings. The Chairman assured him that we would – indeed it is a requirement of HLF approval.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19.40 and was followed by an excellent talk by Ian Harvey, Director of Civic Voice, on the role of Civic Societies in promoting Civic Pride and on the importance of cherishing our Conservation Areas.