

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Musuem Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 3.00pm on Thursday 19 October 2023 in the Meeting Room at Pitstone Green Heritage Park

Present: Mr Allen Fairbrother
Mr Pete Farrar
Mr Rob Henry
Mr Simon Heaton
Mr Pat Kerry
Mr Dave Kirkwood
Mrs Gillian Patschinsky, Secretary
Mr John Powell, Chairman
Mr John Youngs, Treasurer

In Attendance Mr Bill Barnard, Membership Secretary
15 Members of the Society

Mr John Powell, Chairman, welcomed members of the Society to the Annual General Meeting.

1 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Mr Rob Barber, Mrs Lesley Herriott, Mr Dennis Trebble and Mrs Phyllis Griffiths, Independent Examiner.

2 **Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting**

It was proposed that the minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting, previously circulated to members, be approved as a true record.

Proposed: Mr Keith Harrap

Seconded: Mr Simon Heaton

Approved by unanimous vote and signed by the Chairman

3 **Matters Arising**

None

4 **Chairmans Report**

Mr John Powell, Chairman, thanked all the members for an extremely good open day season and for their invaluable support to the Museum.

Mr Powell advised members that, sadly, four long serving members have passed away this year:

Ruby Sharp who ran the pottery for many years;

Roy Smith who operated the bookbinding shop;

Nigel Thompson who was involved in much of the building work in the early days and of course his tractor, the sound of which has been a background to many open days;

Norman Groom – a past President, Norman was an integral and important part of the museum for many years. Members were advised that his ashes were being scattered, at his request, at the museum on Sunday 22 October at 3.00pm and that anyone wishing to pay their respects was welcome to attend.

5 **Treasurers Report and Approval of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023**

Mr John Youngs, Treasurer, reported on last year's accounts (summary previously circulated). He advised that open day takings were the best ever, at £33,190 (before catering and specific open day costs) and that all other income was similar to previous years.

The only exceptional item in the year was the repair of one of the main trusses in the barn roof at a cost of £3840. All other costs were as planned or expected.

After all costs a surplus (profit) of £12151 was achieved. The balance sheet remains strong at £140k of which £121k is in cash. With the extremely low interest rates experienced up to recent times this has not been invested but this is being reviewed with the intention of investing funds for a better return.

It was proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2023 be accepted and approved.

Proposed: Mr John Powell

Seconded: Mr Rob Henry

Accepted and approved by unanimous vote and signed by the Chairman.

6 Museum Manager's Reports

a) Museum Managers Report

Mr Farrar delivered his report on the Museum during 2022 – 23 (see Appendix A)

A PIMS member, and former volunteer, raised a number of issues with regard to the refurbishment of the Brush Shop. It was agreed that they would be discussed with the Secretary after the meeting.

GP

b) Programme and Publicity Report

Mr Farrar delivered the programme and publicity report (see Appendix A)

7 Membership report

Mr Bill Barnard reported that there had been an increase on membership numbers from 2022 to 2023 as follows:

	2023	2022
Life members	9	9
Volunteers	91	81
Paying Members	76	75
Total	176	165

8 Motions from the Membership

No motions had been received from the membership for consideration at this meeting

9 Elections of Officers and Executive Committee Members

It was proposed that Officers be elected as follows:

Chairman Mr Rob Henry
Vice-Chairman Mr John Powell
Secretary Mrs Gillian Patschinsky

Proposed: Mr Dave Kirkwood

Seconded: Mrs Ronnie Powell

Approved by unanimous vote.

Members were advised that the post of Treasurer would remain vacant following Mr John Youngs' resignation but that he will remain as a member of the Executive Committee as Acting Treasurer for the time being.

It was proposed that existing members of the Executive Committee be re-elected as follows:

Mr Rob Barber	Mrs Lesley Herriott
Mr Allen Fairbrother	Mr David Kirkwood
Mr Peter Farrar	Mr Dennis Trebble
Mr Simon Heaton	Mr John Youngs

Proposed: Mr Bill Barnard

Seconded: Mr Malcolm Lee

Approved by unanimous vote.

Members were advised that there was one vacancy on the Committee following the resignation of Mr Pat Kerry and it was the recommendation of the outgoing Executive Committee that Mr Paul Chapman be elected to fill the vacancy.

Proposed: Mr Simon Heaton
Seconded: Mrs Ronnie Powell
Approved by unanimous vote

10 **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Members were advised that Mrs Phyllis Griffiths had confirmed that she is happy to continue as the Society's Independent Examiner and it was proposed that she be reappointed.

Proposed: Mrs Ronnie Powell
Seconded: Mrs Gillian Patschinsky
Approved by unanimous vote

11 **Appointment of Holding Trustees**

Members were advised that two holding trustees had resigned and it was the recommendation of the outgoing Executive Committee that Mrs Gillian Patschinsky and Mr Rob Barber be elected to fill the vacancies

Proposed: Mrs Bill Barnard
Seconded: Mr Tony Baxter
Approved by unanimous vote

The Secretary will prepare the Deed of Appointment documents for signature by the existing trustees.

GP

12 **Members' Questions**

- i) A PIMS member asked whether there would be a volunteers' fish and chip lunch this year. It was confirmed that there would be a lunch and Mr Paul Chapman was tasked with making the arrangements. PC
- ii) A PIMS member asked why the income shown in the accounts for the sale of Museum Guides had fallen from £189 in 2022 to £28 in 2023
Mr Youngs advised that this was due to the date of the printing of the Guides.
- iii) A PIMS member asked if anything could be done about the condition of the drive
Mr Youngs advised that the farm lorries impact on the condition of the drive but that it belongs to Hawkins Farm and is not part of our Lease with the National Trust who have, in the past, paid for the repair material, but may not do so in future.

Mr Farrar advised that we do have the necessary equipment and could improve the drive with more regular maintenance.

It was agreed that maintenance of the drive would be considered by the Executive Committee.

GP

13 **Date and Time of the 2024 Annual General Meeting**

The 2024 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Thursday 17 October 2024 at Pitstone Green Museum

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.15pm

a) Museum Managers’ Report – AGM 2023

I am never quite sure, when concocting one of my reports, who they are meant to be for. Regular volunteers should know what has happened, paid up members have been kept up to date with quarterly newsletters and anyone who isn’t either, probably couldn’t care less.

The funny thing is that judging by the reaction of visitors to a trip to The Museum on Open Days, it shows that in fact there are many people who didn’t know the place existed until they went there and care passionately what happens to any of its exhibits or the buildings they inhabit. The reaction of most newcomers is bit like the guests on the Repair Shop on TV who have just returned to collect a much loved family heirloom, miraculously restored to good health. Wow seems to be the most used exclamation. This reaction is down to the same things in both instances, the care, skill and dedication of the people working towards a common goal.

We are so lucky to have had over many years, a variety of staff from all walks of life, doing their best to produce an amazing end product. The team we have now is probably one of the largest and varied, we have ever had. A huge thanks goes to all of our helpers, particularly the on-site workers who brave the variable weather, all seasons and those unheralded people working behind the scenes on absolutely essential jobs such as treasurer, publicity, insurance, archives, membership, sales, catering, newsletter, correspondence, legal, and so on, without you, we could not exist in our present form. Well done everyone.

Overall, 2023 has been a successful and an eventful year for The Heritage Park, although it's been the last year for three of our volunteers who left us, with lots of memories to rekindle our thoughts of them. To balance the departure we have been very fortunate to welcome quite a few new active volunteers who have fitted into our group seamlessly. We welcome all the new faces and hope you enjoy your time with us. I feel a bit of a fraud writing this, because Dave Kirkwood has been doing most of the management this year, allowing me time off for good behaviour and I think he has done a great job and is popular with the other volunteers.

One of the great leaps forward this year has been the opening up of the grain silo area, into a working exhibit that the public can enjoy and learn a little bit of important history. I hope that this is just the beginning of a comprehensive display using the silos and the grain milling equipment next door in the mill barn.

The departure of the Lancaster bomber equipment has allowed us to gather together everything we need for the replacement Sound Studio, and it looks like it should work out OK with a bit of imagination and the inevitable work from some keen volunteers.

Next year we have some projects to work through, from the refurbishment of the Concrete Workshop, the Brush Shop and many other lesser but equally important tasks, but probably almost more importantly we need people to take over admin jobs, as some of the current job holders find the need to give up, for various reasons, mainly age and ill health, neither of which we have much control over.

Pete Farrar, Manager and Dave Kirkwood, Deputy Manager – October 2023

b) PIMS Talks, Programme and Publicity Report – AGM 2023

As with all aspects of Museum life, the monthly talks have suffered since the effects of Covid took a hold on us. We improved matters a bit, bringing in the change of winter evening times to afternoon meetings. I have been doing 3 jobs for several years and was only to pleased when Richard Bysouth agreed to have a go at doing the talks and was making a good job of it until poor health meant he was in and out of hospital for treatment, making life difficult for him. Ronnie has helped out and we have survived. We intend to stop the talks over the summer months.

Our best wishes to Richard and good health for the future.

Publicity



The effectiveness of publicity is largely measured by the number of people making an effort to come to our open days, this combined with various other things such as the weather and national events. We have been getting reasonable numbers through the gates for the last few years, if more of us would regularly take handfuls of leaflets and distribute them locally, we would probably end up with just about the right numbers. We always have to guard against too much hype, if we went mad and got on

a show like Flog It, we could be overwhelmed and end up worse off.

My thanks go to everyone who helps and particularly the ones that put out road signs, it’s a real slog. A special toast must go to Michelle who keeps us in view on Facebook – many people think social media is the way to go, in the long term. This season, I must admit that I haven’t got round to giving us a plug on locally available ‘events’ web sites and no one else has got round to carrying out visitor surveys to find out how they found out we were open. Usually, the results show that good road signs are the most effective. Unfortunately for us, they are the most laborious.

What we have to appreciate is that our job is split neatly into two:

- Firstly, we have to publicise what we are and what they will discover during a visit and
- Secondly, when we are open for visits.

I think overall that we are doing OK, but a little more effort from everyone (including me) would make all the difference.

Pete and Ronnie Farrar – October 2023