

PITSTONE & IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2002 AT 8.00PM IN THE NEW COMMITTEE ROOM AT PITSTONE MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT:-

Gillian Arney (Chairman and Archivist) John Wallis (Treasurer) Brenda Grace (Secretary) Norman Groom (Museum Manager) Peter Keeley (Deputy Museum Manager) David Lindsey (Watermill Manager) Anne Ball (Publicity Secretary) Sue Lipscomb (Programme Secretary) Val Rayner (Craft Co-ordinator) and Jeannette Wallis (Trading Secretary). Members:- Andrew Gould, Janet Tipler, Geoff and Hazel Travis and Helen Hickson.

APOLOGIES WERE RECEIVED FROM:-

Don Levy, Mike Malone, David Goseltine, Ron and Jean Treacher, Mike and Jean Morris, Roy Curzon, Malcolm Lee, Jean de Selincourt, B Wright and Win Winstone.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2002 were agreed with the exception of Page 4 Watermill Report under 2 Milling should read (nearly 4½ cwt) instead of (nearly 7 cwts). They were then signed as a true record.

MATTERS ARISING – No matters arising

TREASURER'S REPORT – JOHN WALLIS

Interim report for the period 1 April to 14 November 2002
(+/- Since 31 March 2002)

Total funds now stand at £29,892, made up as follows:-

General Fund	2965 (+1063)
Museum Fund	9650 (+1745)
Trading Fund	4843 (+1446)
Watermill Fund	12434 (+ 112)
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	£29892 (+4366)
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We are just over half way through the 2002/2003 financial year and as can be seen from the above figures, a very successful half too. However it is now 'close' season for both Museum and Watermill and a time when most of the expenditure on repairs and improvements are carried out with little further income to cover. I expect therefore the Society's funds to fall during the remainder of the year. Some income will derive from visiting school parties, mainly to the Watermill.

John Wallis

Following the report, Norman asked about the Grant from 'Awards for All' and John replied by saying we had been given £1150. towards the purchase of tables and chairs for the new room.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – GILLIAN ARNEY

The Society has had a very successful six months in all three of its branches. The museum broke the £1,000 barrier in August and there are now nearly twenty fairly regular volunteers who are preparing new exhibits for next year. I will leave Norman to fill in the highs and lows of the season. I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for everything he does to plan for and promote the museum. The Lancaster (which has its critics) has certainly drawn many visitors that we might not have had but the improving quality of the rest of the exhibits keeps them on the site often for a whole day. None of it would be possible without the army of volunteers who make the visitors so welcome on Open Days.

This evening I must particularly thank Helen Hickson who has been Catering Manager for eight years and has turned the job into an important part of the Museums Open Days. In thanking her I have to remind you all that the Catering Manager's job is now empty. Helen has produced a detailed job description and most of the volunteers are willing so it cannot be that difficult to do.

The watermill has also had a successful year and David is to be congratulated for keeping everything going despite many difficulties. We hope that Erma is now on the way to recovery and we shall see her again soon.

The highlight of the Thursday meetings was undoubtedly the Cheese, Wine and Antiques meeting attended by over 100 people and a bat! We shall be repeating this next year and building on this year's experience to improve the event. There seems to be a solid core of regular members at meetings which is greatly swelled on special occasions. This helps greatly with planning future meetings and remember that Sue is always open to suggestions for future speakers. If you hear one somewhere else that you enjoyed, let her know. He/she might have more than one subject so you would not be getting a repeat performance.

The total number of members at present is 159. This continues to increase. As a Pitstone person I am delighted to see more local members now than we have had for many years. It has been assumed by many in Ivinghoe and Pitstone that members of the Society mostly came from elsewhere and were nothing to do with the villages. A relentless press campaign is now beginning to rectify this and a third of the membership lives within three miles of the Museum. I hope the news will continue to spread.

I would like to thank everyone on the committee for all they have done during the last season. Everyone has worked hard and the increase in visitors, volunteers and members attending meetings is a good result. I would particularly like to thank Brenda who has kept an eye on me and sorted out my muddles with endless patience and good humour.

Gillian Arney

MUSEUM REPORT – NORMAN GROOM

In spite of the bad weather we have had this year on several of the Open Days, the year has been a great success and on two occasions we have had our highest income ever, exceeding the magical £1,000 by a sizeable amount. All the advertising and attractions of course, including the catering, crafts, tractor rides, plant stall, racksaw, sawmill, all the engines, the science room, the museum shop, model railway etc., and all those persons that looked after them have contributed to a very successful year.

The new meeting room and kitchen are now complete, it has already been used for one event and provided additional space for other attractions on two of the open days. The new tables have arrived and the chairs are expected in about a week's time.

The pathway access at the rear of the museum through the cart sheds has been paved, the cart sheds cleared completely and Peter Keeley has power washed the building ready to creosote the beams.

The proposed parking area under the trees has been cleared and work is underway to install drainage and provide hard standing, although the recent bad weather has curtailed progress at the moment. Many tons of scrap iron are awaiting disposal but this will stay until further scrap has been collected from around the site.

The roof of the building at the rear of the museum shop and the roof above the racksaw have been completely stripped and replaced using new galvanised iron sheet.

We have had our bad moments however, in the recent gales the corrugated iron roof over the farm machinery display was badly damaged. A large section of the roof was thrown back and onto the Big Barn and another large section was blown completely over the Big Barn, crashing down at the rear of the museum. Yet another project to add to the many others that are continuing, together with several new ones which are planned for the winter months.

It is now proposed to use the Nissen hut to display the multitude of unusual items that are presently stored in the loft. I have suggested the name of 'The Old Curiosity Shop' and it offers great possibilities as another popular attraction for the general public in exploring the past.

The New Grain barn will eventually be set out as a harvest scene although some unwanted items still have to be moved out. The barn walls have been vacuum cleaned and the floor is about to be sealed and painted. Most of the carts and wagons will be housed in the cart sheds at the rear of the museum, retaining those pieces of equipment that could eventually be used as a working demonstration adjacent to the Rick Yard where there would be adequate space.

It is looking more likely that The National Trust will become our Landlord possibly next Autumn. William Hawkins still has a lot to do in clearing his own area to provide parking for the family vehicles. We now have access to all of the museum site except Jeff's workshops. We need these before next Spring, as a considerable amount of work has to be carried out on both the buildings and the gully between the two roofs above the cart shed and the loft.

The cataloguing of all the artefacts we wish to keep, is now fast approaching completion and we have identified those items we wish to dispose of. Many of these items belonged to Jeff and we will be moving them to his storage barn, the remaining ones we are trying to find a good home for them.

We are still adding to and improving the electrical wiring and lighting around the site and have installed an experimental CCTV camera and recorder looking down the side drive which will eventually be linked into the security system. The system will have to be further extended to cover the rear of the museum.

General clearance around the site continues but as we extend and improve the museum we tend to generate even more jobs rather than reduce them and plans are in hand that will occupy the work force for several years to come.

Norman Groom

ARCHIVIST'S REPORT - GILLIAN ARNEY

We now have new volunteers and also a new computer.

PROGRAMME REPORT – SUE LIPSCOMB

Since our last Annual General Meeting in May I have only organised four events. The 'Cheese, Wine and Antiques' event in June at the Museum was extremely popular and successful. This was followed by a conducted tour of Dunstable Priory which was only supported by 12 members and then two talks about 'Hedge Laying' and 'The Aylesbury Gaol'. The popularity of the 'Cheese, Wine and Antiques' evening helped to boost my average attendance number across these four events to 27.

Thanks should go to the stalwart members who always support the talks. I really appreciate your persistence! Remember that I am always open to new ideas for our monthly meetings. In the near future we have talks about Archaeology in Buckinghamshire and Oliver Cromwell and we shall certainly repeat our successful formula of 'Cheese, Wine and Antiques' with Stephen Hearn again this summer in order to celebrate the Society's 40th birthday.

Sue Lipscomb

Norman asked if for the monthly meetings we could in future have videos to show, perhaps on farming, and farming techniques. It was agreed we would look into this.

WATERMILL REPORT – DAVID LINDSEY

1. New Volunteers : The five new volunteers have had their introduction session and each has had 'On-the-job' experience during the year. They are now ready to play a full part next year. Three more have since come forward, one of whom may be suitable for school parties. They will receive their 'introduction' session shortly.

2. 2002 Visitor Season

- (1) General Public : The mill was open on twelve afternoons between Easter Monday and September. There were 743 visitors averaging 62 each afternoon. This is 4% less than the same days in 1998 (a very good year).
- (2) Sales : The gross takings (excluding flour) were £1017, an increase of 16% on 1998.
- (3) School parties : So far 1600 teachers and children, 51% Dell Farm 16% Chiltern Study Centre have visited the Mill. They open the mill themselves.
- (4) Adult parties : Just two came to the mill but they increased the income by £73!
- (5) Milling : Five demonstrations produced 185 1½ kg bags of flour (nearly 5½ cwt) which sold for £185.
- (6) Summary : As the Chairman said, this has been a good season for the mill, not outstanding, but solid and very satisfactory. In the past there have been afternoons when between 120 and 200 visitors have turned up, but this year the most was 99 and 100. We think this is the maximum we can properly cope with and in future we do not intend to seek more.

3. Mill Sub-Committee Meeting was held on 9 October.

The main decisions taken were:-

- (1) 2003 Programme : to increase open afternoons from 12 to 14 with 5 milling demonstrations. The dates will be each first and second Sunday and Bank Holiday between Easter Monday and end of September. Times 2.30-5.30pm.
- (2) Admission Charges as from January 2003.
 - (a) School parties : 75p per child with minimum charge of £15 (i.e. 20 children). No charge for adults and no opening fee.
 - (b) Adult parties : £2 per person with minimum charge of £20 (i.e. 10 persons). No opening fee.
 - (c) B.H's and Sundays : No change i.e. £1.20 per adult and 40p per child.
- (3) Flour : the price to remain at £1 per 1½ kg bag.

4. Mill Maintenance etc..

Throughout the summer months this is confined to running repairs and keeping the mill tidy, with much grass cutting. The syphon has caused problems, much time being spent on it.

5. The Collection

A good steady year for the mill and I am very content with it. The new sluice gate now seems to be working well.

All this could not happen without the constant support of John Wallis and Chris Tugby, and the help of all the volunteers who man the mill on Sunday and Bank Holiday afternoons. Incidentally, Chris is busy setting up the mill's own website which should be completed ready for next year. We look forward to 2003.

David Lindsey

Following David's report Anne Ball asked if we had more people when we mill. David's reply was that we do and this year we sold 49 bags of flour.

Another question asked was did we buy the wheat? Answer – Yes. We bought ½ ton for £43 in November 2000 which lasted for 2001 and part of 2002. We were given 250kg of nitrogen frozen wheat by the Bread and Flour Advisory Council to see us through the year.

PUBLICITY REPORT – ANNE BALL

The number of visitors continues to rise but again it is difficult to determine how much of this is due to the free advertising in the press and local radio stations for both the Watermill and the Museum.

The only advertising we pay for now is for the Family Fun and Craft Days at the Museum. The Leighton Buzzard Observer did a colour advert as part of a one-off special village supplement. This cost £30 but we received lots of positive comments, so it is hoped the newspaper does a similar thing in 2003, but a little earlier in our season as it replaced our usual paid advert for the September Family Fun and Craft Day.

All the advertising for the Museum carries the web address and Norman gets a good number of enquiries via this source.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped with the leaflet distribution this year. This is a time consuming task. It has been decided that in future the leaflet distribution for the Museum will be limited to a 15/20 mile radius. The Watermill distribution will continue as before.

Anne Ball

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Now we come to the constitutional amendments. You all have received the A.G.M. papers, together with an abbreviated version of these proposed changes. No one asked me for a full version or for the old constitution for comparison. This evening you have a complete new constitution and the relevant sections of the 1991 constitution for comparison.

We shall take the amendments in the order that they occur and I shall ask you to vote on each one separately.

No. 1 seems very obvious but the original constitution stated that we would investigate the history of Pitstone and its environs. This does not consider the history or the collecting policy for Ivinghoe and particularly the watermill strongly enough. Does everyone agree?

Proposed by David Lindsey Seconded by John Wallis and carried.

No. 2 (Junior Members)

This requires a little more thought. Junior members have had to be stopped, as unaccompanied children are not permitted in the museum. However the Society did start with the Young Farmers and allowing student members continues this condition. It would save them an adult entrance fee if they visited the museum regularly. All agreed?

Proposed by Norman Groom Seconded by Jeannette Wallis and carried.

No. 3 (Independent Examiner)

It is a technical amendment to keep up with modern practice. We do not use a qualified auditor so he cannot be called so.

All agreed

No. 4 (Order of paragraphs 4 and 5)

This needs no further explanation.

All agreed

No. 5 (The power of Trustees to borrow money)

This also needs no further explanation

All agreed

MAJOR AMENDMENTS

- 1.** Committee spending power to be increased by 10%: the Chairman commented that with some major projects in the pipeline for future years and a larger income, the Museum in particular needed more financial freedom. The Chairman also remarked that the clause concerning Acquisition and Disposal for both Watermill and Museum should be changed to reflect the working documents presented to Resource at registration.

After discussion the amendment was passed.

Proposed by David Lindsey Seconded by John Wallis
Twelve members in favour, one against and two abstentions.

- 2.** This amendment concerning trustees though presented to the membership with the others, could not be agreed.

The Chairman said that the amendment concerning the trustees could not be discussed that day. After the Annual General Meeting papers were sent to members, a fundamental disagreement arose in the committee about the wording of the amendment. An E.G.M. will be called for the February meeting in order to present this amendment.

There was a great deal of wide ranging discussion concerning the government of the Society at which strongly felt views were expressed by members, but no resolution was passed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nominations for the following positions have been received:-

Chairman

Brenda Grace proposed **Gillian Arney** and this was seconded by David Goseltine and carried.

Treasurer

David Lindsey proposed **John Wallis** and this was seconded by Gillian Arney. and carried.

Secretary

Gillian Arney proposed **Brenda Grace** and this was seconded by Norman Groom and carried.

Vice Chairman – Position not filled.

Malcolm Lee (Committee) said he did not want to stand again. Malcolm was thanked for his time on the committee.

The rest of the committee were voted en bloc.

**Archivist
Museum Manager
Deputy Museum Manager
Watermill Manager
Trading Secretary
Publicity Secretary
Programme Secretary
Craft Co-ordinator**

**Gillian Arney
Norman Groom
Peter Keeley
David Lindsey
Jeannette Wallis
Anne Ball
Sue Lipscomb
Val Rayner**

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

David Hardwick was proposed by John Wallis and seconded by David Lindsey and carried.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Val Rayner brought up the subject of Public Liability. Our cover is 5 million.

Hazel Travis asked regarding cover for Insurance when she is Lace Making at the Museum.

John answered and said that you have to be covered by your own insurance.

Val Rayner said she would put this in the letters when sending to the Crafts people for the Open Days.

A vote of thanks was expressed to Gill for all her good work.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Following the meeting a Quiz was held, this had been arranged by Gill.

