

# **PITSTONE & IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY**

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2011 AT PITSTONE GREEN MUSEUM AT 19.30**

### **1. Present:-**

Museum Manager & Vice Chairman - Norman Groom (in the chair), Treasurer – John Youngs, Secretary - Peter Keeley Executive Committee Members – Sue Lipscomb, Dennis Trebble and Anne Ball  
Plus 16 additional members of PIMS

### **2. Apologies were received from:-**

Mike Malone, Ken & Judith Halls, Nigel Thompson, Jean Treacher, Les Laing, John Wallis, John & Margaret Cole, Hilda Donovan and John Childs

### **3. Minutes of the AGM (18<sup>th</sup> November 2010)**

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Sandra Barnard, seconded by Bill Barnard and carried.

### **4. Matters arising**

There were none.

### **5. Chairman's Report – John Childs**

In the absence of John Childs, Norman Groom read his report:-

#### Chairman's Report for meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Firstly let me welcome you to this Annual General Meeting and apologise for not being able to attend myself, the first which I should have been chairing.

Money received this year from open day entrances and sales have been marginally better than last year despite two very wet days.

It has been a sad year in as much as we have lost three long serving volunteers, David Goseltine past chairman and a volunteer who had been at the museum almost since its conception.

David died suddenly in July, his knowledge of the history of the museum and expertise is sorely missed and many objects of his workmanship are to be found around the site.

We also lost, after a long illness, Ron Ashurst, a retired fireman who was a great procurer of materials and very handy with the creosote brush!

Mike Morris 'proprietor' of our shop on open days assisted by his wife Jean, passed away in August after battling lung cancer, Mike also was responsible for the painting and labelling of the microcosm rooms, his happy smile will also be missed.

Farewell was said to Mike Bickerton a skilled carpenter and his assistant Allan Easter, Mike found that standing at a bench for several hours was becoming too much for him, many items of his efforts can be seen around the museum in the form of restored cart wheels together with the complete restoration of the mill stationed by the door of this room. Thanks must be given to all those unseen volunteers without whose help open days would not happen, these include the stalwarts who drive the tractor giving rides to the wind mill, the catering staff, the shop "assistants", rack saw operatives, the "receptionist" etc. it would be difficult to name them all, indeed in trying would result no doubt in someone being left out

Of course, the crafts, dancers, potters, photographers do not just turn up, all have to be organised, as are the speakers for the monthly Thursday talks, together with the compilation of the museum news letter, maintaining membership records, publicity and our treasurer who keeps us all in financial order, all are willing volunteers.

Obviously we have to continuously maintain, expand and alter the museum in order to keep the interest of our regular visitors, this is managed under the watchful eye of our Museum manager, Norman Groom, sometimes looked upon as our Dictator but whose ideas are always welcome.

A decision was made last year to restore and paint the rusty farm machinery which was displayed around the site, the results which are now evident and certainly make the museum more colourful.

Projects in hand for this winter are for the replacement of the surface water drainage from the barn housing the farm workshop and the removal and re-erection in a new location of the "green shed" to be replaced by a new building which will be used by our to show on open days, the ongoing restoration of our carts.

I will close by again thanking all those who give their time in order to keep this museum functioning, and look forward to the forthcoming year.

### **6. Treasurer's Report – John Youngs**

Copies of the accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 were available at the meeting.

## Treasurer's Report for meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011

This was given by John Youngs:-

I am pleased to report another satisfactory financial year, although not as good as 2010.

Page 2 of the Accounts details our Income and Expenditure for the year.

Open Day income for the year was lower than 2009/2010 which was historically our best year ever. Our year end being 31<sup>st</sup> March creates an anomaly as our major income comes from the Open Days in the previous year so the comparative 2010 income was actually received in 2009, a record year. Unfortunately in 2010/2011 we did not achieve the same level of lettings of the barn for functions, nor receive a £1000 donation as we did from H G Williamson in 2010. Our budgeted income for 2010/2011 was £16k and as you can see we achieved £15.4k.

We do operate to a budget as suggested by the Charity Commissioners and do manage to keep to the totals if not the detail.

On the expenditure side we budgeted for £15.7k and we spent £15.6k so we do have control of our expenditure. Your Executive Committee decided to allow a small deficit this year of £215 rather than squeeze our expenditure to meet the £473 budgeted surplus, we believe this is acceptable as we have made surpluses for many years.

Our main expenditure as ever was on projects, in particular a new shed for storage of artefacts previously held outside and improvements to the perimeter fencing adjacent to the new Council Allotments. It also covered the refurbishment of the Reception and an additional room for display of our collection of computers and microscopes. We believe our Balance Sheet, page 3, with Reserves of £42k of which £29k is cash is more than adequate to support the level of trading and expenditure we incur. We are substantially stronger than the requirements of the Charity Commissioners for operations of our size.

The Accounts have been independently examined by Mr Roy Cleary who has appended his certificate on page 1.

The Treasurer was asked by Geoff Evans why the Society held such a large cash reserve of £29k and he went on to explain that we had historically had that amount and that he believed it to be prudent to maintain that amount when dealing with building restoration. We always set a budget to control how the cash reserve is spent.

Approval of the Accounts was proposed by Rob Barber and seconded by Tony Sergeant and carried by those present.

### **7. Sub Committee Reports**

- **Museum Report – Peter Keeley**

Peter reminded us that the recent Museum Report was within the latest Newsletter.

- **Programme – Sue Lipscomb**

This year we have had a wide ranging selection of talks which have been quite well supported by our membership. The average attendance has been 28 people which compares very favourably with the 23 of last year. Our most popular talks have been those relating to Papermaking given by Mike Stanyon, Woburn Abbey when Chris Gravett came to talk and Emlyn Jones' talk about Bomb Disposal in WW11 which was particularly well supported and greatly enjoyed.

As always the Cheese, Wine and Antiques was extremely well supported with 55 people attending. For those who were there, the cheese and wine was great but our Auctioneer, Stephen Hearn forgot to come. In spite of this disappointment, those who stayed rallied round and began to talk about their own antiques, sharing what knowledge they had of them and it turned into a very interesting if rather different evening! I must say it was a programme secretary's worst nightmare come true that evening. I do intend to book Stephen again this year and hope that with many reminders from me, you will all turn up again to support this deservedly popular event.

I will continue to do my very best to provide a variety of interesting speakers for our members' entertainment and interest and will maintain the brief of concentrating on local history first and foremost with talks about general historical topics and our local environment as other possibilities. Please do remember that I am always ready to listen to your ideas for good speakers and interesting subject matter for the forthcoming year.

Once again, I would like to thank Rob and Barbara Barber who are always here when I arrive and serve the tea and coffee at every meeting.

- **Publicity – Anne Ball**

We had 10,000 leaflets printed for this season, and they were all used. The first distribution went out early in the year and we hope to repeat this for 2012. Once again Norman designed the leaflet and John Childs and John Youngs arranged for the printing, so our thanks to them and also my thanks to all those who helped with the circulation.

I continue to write to those newspapers that have a 'listings' section and I believe we do still get visitors as a result. Because of the very many requests they now receive most local radio stations only add our Open Days onto their website, although we did get a mention on Chiltern Radio for our August Open Day. We are still hoping that we can get a member / members to put up and take down more roadside adverts just prior to an Open Day. These boards have increasingly proved successful in attracting visitors and we would welcome anyone who is prepared to take on this task in a new situation, particularly in the Tring area.

- **Membership Report – Bill Barnard**

Membership stands at 151, one less than this time last year.

We have sadly had 3 volunteers pass away, as mentioned in the Chairman's Report, and 20 other members have not yet renewed, but there is still time though.

New members have made up for most of these losses.

As I said in last year's report, I would like membership renewals to be accompanied by cheques and completed forms, which makes it easier for me to process.

Getting scraps of paper with notes that people have paid cash to someone, does not help.

I will be semi-retiring very soon, and I hope to put more of my time into helping out at the Museum.

Bill Barnard gave a membership list to the Secretary for the AGM records.

- **Computer Records Officer and Newsletter Editor– Sandra Barnard**

Following the recent work continued by Peter Keeley and Dennis Trebble, the records I have received for artefacts are now all entered on the computer. Peter has provided me with thumbnails of photographs of artefacts, which have been added to the program. Dennis has made great progress documenting our collection of books and the contents of the drawers in the loft. I have added all the information I have received on to the computer.

Records for the photographs still need some attention which I hope to continue with as soon as I get a slot free.

Bill and I are hoping to provide a better display of them on open days. This we hoped to do this year but due to my illness it has had to be delayed until next year.

Regarding the Newsletter, we still need more articles for this. I am happy to provide them when we are short of contributors, but we still need more input from others. Dennis has recently provided interesting articles on the documents he has discovered. We have had several from Ena Ashurst, widow of Ron. Other members of the committee provide documents occasionally.

I do have a problem at times when contributions are given to me very late and there is a deadline, like the AGM, for papers to be received by members. The possibility of an earlier meeting for the committee to agree documents should be considered.

## **8. To consider and approve the Membership Fees for 2012-2013**

It was proposed that single membership fees should be £10.00 and a couple should pay £15.00 per annum. Bob Barber proposed this motion and Dennis Trebble seconded it. It was carried.

## **9. Election of officers and committee members**

- **Officers**

Chairman – John Childs

Vice Chairman – Norman Groom

Treasurer – John Youngs

Secretary – Peter Keeley

The above officers were proposed 'en bloc' by Jean Morris and seconded by Bill Barnard and was carried.

Norman then read the following statement from the constitution regarding the Executive Committee:-

The Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) shall consist of the four Officers and up to eight members elected by the A.G.M. and eligible for re-election at the A.G.M. All members of the Committee shall be individual members of the Society. The Committee shall have power to co-opt to fill vacancies arising during the year. Committee members may be elected to specific posts as designated by the outgoing Committee, or at the A.G.M. and advertised in the notice convening the A.G.M.

- **Executive Committee posts**

Dennis Trebble - Archivist

Sue Lipscomb – Programme Secretary and Minutes Secretary

Anne Ball – Publicity

Sandra Barnard – Computer Records and Newsletter

Bill Barnard – Membership Secretary and Technical Advisor

These people were voted in en bloc. This was proposed by Barbara Barber and seconded by Rob Barber and the meeting agreed.

Only five of the eight places were filled but no-one offered to become an additional member of the Executive Committee.

- **Other Non-Committee Roles**

Norman Groom – Museum Manager

Margaret Elliott – Entertainment Organiser

John Childs – Site Manager

Jeanette Wallis – Trading Secretary

Brenda Grace – Craft Co-ordinator

These people were voted in en bloc. This was proposed by Sandra Barnard and seconded by Gill Graves and the meeting agreed.

## **10. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Roy Geary is standing down from this position and Norman Groom proposed a vote of thanks. Tony Sergeant is willing to take on this role and was proposed by Rob Barber and seconded by Bill Barnard and was agreed unanimously.

## **11. Any other business**

- Geoff Evans asked whether there were any plans to improve the entrance driveway since it gave a poor 'first impression' of the Museum. Norman explained that the driveway does not belong to PIMS, we merely have right of way along it. We have in the past obtained two quotes of around £5,000 and £10,000 and will consider looking into the problem again. Sandra Barnard added that we might be held responsible for the possible damage to visitor's cars.
- Bill Barnard asked whether we order too many publicity leaflets. Sue explained that we maintained the same amount as last year as we intend to approach three local schools to ask if leaflets could go home with each child at the start of the season. This could be monitored to see whether more families are attending our Open Days as a result.

The meeting closed at 20.20