

# **PITSTONE & IVINGHOE MUSEUM SOCIETY**

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2016 AT PITSTONE GREEN MUSEUM AT 19.30**

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

Vice Chairman Norman Groom

Treasurer – John Youngs

Secretary - Dennis Trebble

Publicity Secretary - Pete Farrar

Programme and Minutes Secretary – Sue Lipscomb

Membership Secretary – Bill Barnard

Plus 33 additional members of PIMS

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

Sandra Barnard, John Childs, Lesley and Tim Newing, Ron and Barbara Hartwell, Margaret and Roy Underwood, John Cole and Elaine Morphew, Paul Chapman.

### **3. Minutes of the AGM (26<sup>th</sup> November 2015)**

Once again we did not print copies of last year's AGM but instead the main points, including the Treasurer's report were outlined clearly by Norman Groom, in the absence of the Chairman.

### **4. Matters arising**

There were some questions from the floor regarding the issue of the silos and John Young explained that the National Trust had suggested two companies who might do the work related to the silos and Pete Farrar has also followed this up by approaching other companies but all to no avail.

John Oxley then asked whether anything had been done to resolve the concern that those in the Colin Cook Collection might be trapped if there was a fire. Norman Groom said that it had been decided not to lock the office so that people could escape that way but John then asked what they would do if the fire was on the stairs and Pete Farrar confirmed that the most likely site of a fire would be by the Crossley Engine.

It was clear that there was some dissatisfaction with the situation and that it should be referred back to the committee for further consideration. There had been an inspection of the site related to our insurance and the company would return with suggestions for three areas on the site, one of which is the Colin Cook Collection.

The matter of the entrance signage was again raised with particular mention of visual impact and open day information. It was felt that more needed to be achieved in this direction.

The discussion also included how to disseminate information about the museum to interested parties and the idea of a dedicated museum phone to be held by one or other officers of the society was discussed, with some approval from the floor.

The meeting was told that we now have a very good Museum Mentor called Stephen Barker.

It was then proposed by Bill Barnard and seconded by Nigel Thompson that the minutes should be accepted as a true record and this was carried unanimously and the minutes signed.

### **5. Chairman's Report – delivered by Norman Groom**

It again has been a successful year for the Society. The membership is stable, a few dropping out and a few more joining. Our Editor has again produced a series of interesting Newsletters throughout the year. Our income is steadily rising and the monthly meetings have provided a series of interesting talks and several special evening events. The interests of the Society has narrowed somewhat over the years, we once had a thriving archaeology section and for a period held the lease for Ford End Water Mill. This has now narrowed and the dominant part of the Society is of course Pitstone Museum.

The museum is by far the biggest spender whilst at the same time brings a steady and ever increasing income to the Society.

You will all have read the monthly Newsletters and the Museum reports and you can see from the reports the amount of work that is carried out by the ever increasing team of volunteers. Every year there is something new for the visitors to see. We must remember of course the behind the scenes members that make the open days the success they are, many providing interesting exhibits or activities and especially the catering staff who have quite a demanding task. The income from the catering now approaches a substantial percentage of our total income for the day. Again

the success of the society depends as well as those that work, often at home in their own time, on office and paperwork, secretarial work and work on the archives, all this often hidden from view. Early in the year our Secretary submitted our renewal application for Accreditation to the Arts Council who have taken over from the previous MLA, the Museum & Libraries Archives. We also have a Curatorial Advisor who has helped us in submitting the documentation which gets bigger and bigger each year. However the Arts Council is now apparently short staffed and we still await the results of the submission some seven months later.

## **6. Treasurer's Report and approval of accounts for the year ending 31.03. 16 – John Youngs**

Apologies that the last Newsletter did not include the PIMS Balance Sheet for 2016 on the last page as last year. This was due to timing issues. However I am pleased to report yet another successful financial year for PIMS. Before stating any detail I must inform you that because Easter 2015 and 2016 fell within one financial year the EC agreed that we should carry forward the March 2016 takings result into the financial year ending 31.03.2017. This will avoid distortion when we compare year on year.

Income for 2016 was £26k compared to 2015 £22.5k, the surplus for 2016 was £11542 compared to previous year £9801. Open days were good and the major area of income, there was nothing else exceptional to report. As in previous years the high surplus was due to low spend on projects, general overheads remain at similar levels. The problem we have continues to be lack of volunteer time.

Our Balance Sheet continues to be healthy with a total asset value of £79k of which £64k is cash.

The current year continues well with Open day takings being similar to last year in fact £600 lower. Cash at bank is £10k up which reflects the current surplus of income over expenditure.

If anyone would like a copy of the financial statements then let me have your details and I will send you a copy.

## **7. Sub Committee Reports**

- **Museum Report**

We were reminded that each newsletter contained a detailed Museum Report. The latest project is the Elliott Shop which is being reconstructed in the area that was the tractor shed.

- **Programme – Sue Lipscomb**

Once again we have had an interesting and varied selection of talks throughout 2016 and I would like to thank those of you who attended them. As always, our Cheese, Wine and Antiques evening is enthusiastically supported by many members, but the actual talk that attracted most attendees was the one given by Mel Davis in February when she chronicled her challenge when climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. On that evening 33 people attended! At this stage of the year I usually average out the attendances during the preceding year and the number has dropped a little to only 24. I must once again thank Barbara and Rob for their support when setting up and serving the refreshments every evening and Brenda who always welcomes members at the door (and takes their money!).

Many of you will know that I am resigning from this job after 21 years and would like to thank the committee for the beautiful bouquet of flowers I received recently.

And finally I was delighted to discover that Pete Farrar (together with Ronnie) is prepared to take on this job and really look forward to attending the talks in future without having the responsibility of booking them!

- **Publicity – Pete Farrar**

Overall, this year has been a frustrating year for the publicity department. Ronnie made a big effort to contact local schools to show them what we have on offer and we had a full three hours of coverage, with an outside broadcast with Nick Coffey of BBC Three Counties Radio, and yet our attendances were very average for the first part of the season, partially we think, due to clashes with other major events.

My attempt at getting a brand new website resulted in a few changes to the existing one. My efforts to get a new sign for the front of the site have come to nothing and we have had some trouble with roadside signs disappearing, which is both costly and annoying.

We have been included in the tourist map for Enjoy Decorum which had 35,000 copies printed and distributed and we have been included in the Visit Herts. promotion, even though we are not quite in Hertfordshire, but our research did not show much response for either of these initiatives.

Next year we will hopefully be getting some new, slightly smaller road signs of a similar design to the present ones. We will try to get more mass publicity in local popular paper publications along with all the internet based publicity. It would be good to find a volunteer with the time and inclination to get us more active on Facebook and Twitter.

When devising publicity, I think it would be useful to split the message into two sections. Firstly we need to let the world know that we exist and show them what we have on offer. Secondly we need to tell them when we are open. If we can tempt them sufficiently with the first then they are more likely to respond to the second.

Although we had event clashes and the weather was not particularly kind to us, our numbers held up and the overall response to our wonderful museum was very good and most people were very impressed.

- **Membership Report – Bill Barnard**

This year our membership is down by 18 members from last year's list. We have 160 members as opposed to 178 last year. The 160 members equates to sending out 105 newsletters, as many are joint members.

We also send out our newsletters to 11 other organisations. We also waste some newsletter printing and postage when we send out newsletters to previous year's members that do not renew in the following year. Something that we might like to think about.

Sandra, our excellent newsletter editor, has asked me to ask you for either articles to include in our newsletters or suggestions of articles that you think would be of interest.

## **8. To consider any motions brought forward by the membership**

There were none

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

To summarise:-

CHAIRMAN currently John Childs,  
VICECHAIRMAN currently Norman Groom,  
TREASURER currently John Youngs  
SECRETARY currently Dennis Trebble

The following members, some being on the committee and others not have agreed to undertake specific tasks:-

Pete Farrar is to stand down as Museum Deputy Manager but take on the task as Programme Secretary and Publicity Secretary

Sue Lipscomb is therefore standing down as Programme Secretary but will continue as Minutes Secretary

Norman Groom as Museum Manager

Sue Denty as Archivist

Sandra Barnard as Newsletter Editor

Bill Barnard as Membership Secretary

John Childs as Museum Site Manager

Ronnie Farrar managing the Museum Shop

Brenda Grace and Margaret Elliot as Crafts Organiser and Dance Group Organiser respectively

Paul Chapman and Nigel Thompson are also committee members

This leaves a vacancy for Museum Deputy Manager

Sue Denty wishes to stand down as a committee member leaving up to 4 vacancies. There were no volunteers.

It was proposed by Bill Barnard and seconded by Keith Harrup that the above people should be voted in en bloc. This was unanimously agreed.

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

It was proposed by Gill Graves and seconded by John Oxley that Tony Sargeant should be appointed to continue in this role and all were in favour.

## **11. Any other business**

There was none.

Signed by the Chairman .....

Date .....