

Pitstone and Ivinghoe Musuem Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 3.00pm on Thursday 24 November 2022 in the Meeting Room at Pitstone Green Heritage Park

Present: Mr Allen Fairbrother
Mr Rob Henry, Chairman
Mrs Leslie Herriott
Mr Pat Kerry, Vice Chair
Mr John Powell
Mr Dennis Trebble
Mr John Youngs, Treasurer

In Attendance Mrs Gillian Patschinsky, minute taker
21 Members of the Society

Mr Rob Henry, Chairman, welcomed members of the Society to the Annual General Meeting.

1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Mr Simon Heaton, Mr John Childs, Mr Pete Farrar and Mrs Phyllis Griffiths, Independent Examiner. It was noted that Mr Farrar had been taken ill and members sent their best wishes.

2 Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

It was proposed that the minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting, previously circulated to members, be approved as a true record.

Proposed: Mr Tony Baxter

Seconded: Mr Roy Smith

Approved by unanimous vote and signed by the Chairman

3 Matters Arising

None

4 Chairmans Report

Mr Rob Henry, Chairman, thanked all the members for an extremely good open day season and for their invaluable support to the Museum. Special thanks were extended to Mr Pete Farrar and the volunteers who make it possible. He also reported on the Executive Committee's investigation into alternative energy solutions, details of which can be found in the copy of his report at Appendix A.

A member questioned whether a smaller generator with backup batteries had been considered.

Mr Henry advised that it had been considered but that the lithium batteries are very expensive and a smaller generator would not supply sufficient power for open days. He also advised that lighting is being updated to LEDs on an ongoing basis and that the Executive Committee are keeping alternative energy solutions under review.

Mr Henry reported that in Mr Farrar's absence he would deliver the Manager's Museum Report at Agenda Item 6 on his behalf.

5 Treasurers Report and Approval of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022

Mr John Youngs, Treasurer, reported on the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022. The Balance Sheet, previously circulated, shows a surplus of £13,544 for the year 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, which was supported by a Covid grant. Whilst this shows an increase over the previous year's loss of £8282, the loss during 2020 - 2021 was due to expenditure incurred re-roofing the barn. It was noted that, although there had been little income from room hire or filming during the 2021 - 2022 period, the Balance sheet remains healthy at £127, 897. A copy of the Treasurer's Report can be found at Appendix B.

It was proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 be accepted and approved.

Proposed: Mr Dennis Trebble

Seconded: Mr Rob Barber

Accepted and approved by unanimous vote and signed by the Chairman

6 Reports

a) Museum Managers Report

Mr Rob Henry delivered Mr Pete Farrar's report on the Museum in his absence, a copy of which can be found at Appendix C

b) Programme Report – passed in Mr Farrar's absence

c) Publicity Report – passed in Mr Farrar's absence

d) Membership report

Mr Bill Barnard reported that there had been an increase of 6 on membership numbers from 2021 to 2022 as follows:

	2022	2021
Life members	9	8
Volunteers	81	70
Paying Members	75	81
Total	165	159

7 Motions from the Membership

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

8 Elections of Officers and Executive Committee Members

It was proposed that existing Officers be re-elected as follows:

Chairman	Rob Henry
Vice-Chairman	Pat Kerry
Treasurer	John Youngs

Proposed: Mrs Ronnie Powell

Seconded: Mrs Barbara Barber

Approved by unanimous vote.

Members were advised that Mr Dennis Trebble had resigned as Secretary but would remain as a Committee Member and continue to produce the Newsletter. The Chairman extended the thanks of the Committee and Members for his work as Secretary. The outgoing Executive Committee had received one application for the post of Secretary from Mrs Gillian Patschinsky and it was their recommendation that she be elected to the post.

Proposed: Mr Rob Barber

Seconded: Mr Tony Baxter

Approved by unanimous vote.

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

Mr Allen Fairbrother
Mr Peter Farrar
Mr Simon Heaton
Mrs Lesley Herriott
Mr John Powell
Mr Dennis Trebble

Proposed: Mrs Ronnie Powell

Seconded: Mrs Barbara Barber

Approved by unanimous vote.

Members were advised that Mr Paul Chapman, Mr John Childs and Mrs Sue Lipscomb had resigned from the Committee and the Chairman extended his thanks to them for their past service. As Mr Trebble is continuing as a Committee member following his resignation as Secretary, it was the recommendation of the outgoing Executive Committee that the following applicants be elected to fill the remaining two Committee vacancies:

Mr Rob Barber
Mr Hector Selth

Proposed: Mr Bill Barnard
Seconded: Mrs Sue Denty
Approved by unanimous vote

9 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: Mr Bill Barnard
Approved by unanimous vote

10 Any Other Business

Mr John Youngs advised members that the Lancaster Cockpit had been sold prior to the auction and is due to be collected on Thursday 1 December. It was noted that the 'Pilot's Outfit' had been donated to the museum and had not been included in the sale.

A member asked if there had been any progress on the proposed garage extension and was advised that their report is to be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting which is being held in January 2023.

Mr Pat Kerry proposed moving the AGM to earlier in the year, possibly July. Mrs Patschinsky advised that the Constitution only requires that there are no more than 15 months between meetings so it could be moved if required. Following a discussion with members on possible dates, it was agreed that a recommendation be taken to the January Executive Committee Meeting to move the meeting to Thursday 19 October 2023, which will be prior to the change to GMT when the evenings are lighter and after the last open day of the season.

Mr Dennis Trebble requested that members consider writing articles about their lives for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Mr John Youngs advised members that whilst the future of the Concrete Workshop had been mentioned in the Manager's Report, the building could not be knocked down as it remains the property of the National Trust.

A member asked if a decision had been made as to whether the museum would be open on Monday 8 May 2023, as many volunteers felt that there would be too many open days in May and there would be insufficient numbers available. The Chairman advised that the museum will not be open on that day.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.05pm.

Chairman's Report

Thank you all for an extremely good open day season. It was encouraging to see families and their children really enjoying their time with us after some very difficult years. Special thanks go to Pete and the regular volunteers that make things happen and run smoothly. It is good to see that we have a number of new volunteers. Also good that they appear to be younger than most of us.

Pete's report highlights the range of interesting and essential projects that are planned or are already in progress for the closed season.

One important subject relates to our concerns about the exponential rise in utility costs. In our case this is essentially electricity. The projected rise in our electricity charges is four times our current rate and is expected to be much higher. (14.7p kWh to 56p kWh at present). We have carried out a preliminary investigation of possible ways to offset these costs. Unfortunately, the options appear to be problematic for various reasons. (We have a base load of approx. 8kW on open days and approx. up to 4kW on work days.)

1. Solar Energy: Finding a suitable South facing roof without obstruction, for upwards of 80sqM of panels, and unlikely NT approval, has really ruled this out
2. Wind turbine: Not fully appraised however, siting for a relatively large unit in an unobstructed area would again be difficult. Also, would be less reliable than solar.
3. Diesel generator: Surprisingly, at the moment, using normal white diesel, it is an economical option. (Capital outlay approx. £6000 cost per kWh 51p)

Obviously, the diesel option would give us back up power without expensive batteries, however at the moment it would not do much for our green credentials.

As there is a good possibility that energy prices will at least stabilise in the Spring, we have put all further investigation on hold for now.

Finally, I would like to personally thank you all for your continued invaluable support to our Museum.

Treasurer's Report

A copy of the financial results for the year ended 31 March 2022 was included with the notice of meeting and autumn newsletter. Hopefully you will have all read it.

Surplus for the year is £13,544, better than expected. Our actual six Open days were above prior years' average and the £8k Covid grant made up the loss of the first four Open days.

Comparison to the prior year loss of £8,282 has limited meaning as there was no trading in that year except for a £20k Covid grant and exceptional spend of £20k replacing the Silos roof.

We were fortunate to receive a donation of £1k from the Foskett Family who also gave us an Austin 7 and a Ford 100E to add to our displays. The lack of sales of Room Hire, Filming, School and Club visits is disappointing. Expenditure on Open days has increased due to ticket system costs and resulting bank charges plus the hire of toilets.

Expenditure of note is restoration of the Austin 7, our new Reception Shed and the Cook collection room Fire Escape. The cost of renewing our electrical wiring continues. Many thanks to our hard-working volunteers who save many £000s if we had to employ outside tradesmen.

Other overheads generally as expected. Rent is low as National Trust suspended all rent reviews just as ours was due. Utility costs remain stable as our supply contract runs until August 2023

Capital spend was minimal at £715. We did consider capitalising the costs of restoring the Austin 7 but as we have never capitalised any restoration or improvement of artifacts previously, believe this would be wrong.

As regards Balance Sheet, no items of significant change. Of total reserves of £128K, £115k is cash.

Current financial year. Open day income is back to pre-covid level no surprises yet in expenditure so we expect an improved surplus.

Thanks for your attention happy to answer any questions.

Manager's Report

As another very successful season comes to a close we must congratulate ourselves on a job well done. We were lucky, after the last few years of problems such as Covid, Brexit, Ukraine, global warming, shortages of everything and the rising costs of just existing, our season of open days went brilliantly and we had new records set for many aspects of our organisation. Our deepest sympathies go to anyone who lost anyone this year and our warmest welcome goes to anyone who fancies joining our band of loyal supporters.

On open days, in particular, thanks must go to the folk in catering who at times were running close to exhaustion and the chaps organising the car parks which at times were very busy and exceedingly hot. Overall, everyone performed superbly and gave our visitors a great day out at a very reasonable price. Well done and thanks for your support.

With regards to jobs and projects, it's amazing how much work is needed just to keep things up to scratch for the visiting public. Particular thanks must go to our team of electricians who continue to update the site's electrical circuits to modern standards and have devised a new system for starting our giant Crossley engine which could reduce the risk of volunteers having a heart attack while trying to start it by hand. Ray and Lesley have almost finished their mammoth task of creosoting the walls of the buildings in the sheep yard and by the time you read this, the body of the Austin 7 should be reunited with its chassis and well on its way to becoming the vehicle it was designed to be. The green shed is now reserved for storage of materials for the electricians, who also have their own workbench for their specialist work. We have an engraving machine installed and working, in the corner of the bookbinders, which we could use for all sorts of purposes. The garage extension preliminary work has been completed, so we just need to decide what layout we want, to make it into an interesting exhibit, this will enable us to finalise the design, draw up some plans and work out a budget and a plan of works for the project. I would like to progress the display in the silo with an opening cut in it, but it requires some interesting woodwork to get it working as a pair of millstones would and I don't get time to do it. We're making progress with starting to turn the silo area into a proper exhibit but the first thing we need to do is to work out how it works, for ourselves!

The repairs to the Big Barn have not physically progressed due to the local chaps doing the job being so busy. It's great being able to push some work in the direction of the Whinnett family in the form of Steve who is the brother of the brilliant Jim, who has been driving our tractor on the trailer rides on Open Days since the beginning of the 1980s. There can't be many people who can beat that for loyalty, thanks Jim. We now have a plan and work should be completed by the end of January 2023.

We still haven't decided what to do about modernising the Concrete Workshop, the options are endless from total replacement to ripping out the internal cladding, depriving the local squirrels of a home. Whatever we do, the main problem is probably, what do we do with the contents, while work is carried out? All suggestions gratefully received.

In the meantime work carries on as normal but I need to remind everyone that many of our senior (committee) members are getting close to handing over their responsibilities to some younger people, we need these posts filled if we are to continue, so I would urge anyone who could help, to put their names forward, even if it's to carry out a relatively small task.

Thanks for your support and tolerance and best wishes to you all – Pete Farrar