

## **Pitstone and Ivinghoe Museum Society**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 3.00pm on Thursday 17 October 2024 in the Meeting Room at Pitstone Green Heritage Park**

**Present:** Mr Rob Barber  
Mr Allen Fairbrother  
Mr Pete Farrar  
Mr Rob Henry, Chairman  
Mr Simon Heaton  
Mrs Lesley Herriott, Treasurer  
Mr Pat Kerry  
Mr Dave Kirkwood  
Mrs Gillian Patschinsky, Secretary  
Mr John Powell, Vice-Chairman

**In Attendance** Mr Bill Barnard, Membership Secretary  
17 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 John Youngs, Mrs Phyllis Griffiths, Independent Examiner and eight PIMS members.

#### **2 Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting**

It was agreed that the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3 Matters Arising**

None

#### **4 Chairmans Report**

Mr Rob Henry, Chairman, advised members that it had been another good open day season, in spite of some inclement weather at times.

We have welcomed some new volunteers who have already made considerable contributions to our ongoing maintenance and project needs, and to additional interesting exhibits. One example is our Ham radio station, GB5PGM, set up and operated by Clive Asquith on open days. This has been highlighted in the latest newsletter.

Some of our larger planned projects have been completed during the year or are well advanced. These include, the mechanical and electrical refurbishment of the 'concrete' workshop, installation of a new 'Tannoy' system and the first fix wiring for a new alarm system has been completed by the in-house electrical team ready for the contractor to complete the installation of the new system.

There are many other projects in progress. As always, a big thank you to all our volunteers and Committee members for the work they do.

Mr Henry extended special thanks must go to John Youngs who retired as treasurer at the end of the 2023-24 financial year after many years as our treasurer due to ill health. He is, however, remaining as a Committee member where his years of experience at the museum will be invaluable. In addition, He also thanked Lesley Herriott for taking on our accounts management as Treasurer at short notice, and Gill Patschinsky, the Secretary, for keeping our EC members on track.

Mr Henry advised members that Sandra and Bill Barnard are retiring – in addition to supporting the Open Days with books and photos on local history researched from the museum archives,

they have been one of the 'behind-the-scenes' backbones of the museum for many years in a variety of roles, most recently being responsible for managing the PIMS membership. They will be greatly missed.

Mr Henry informed members that, after some very interesting years in post, he has decided to retire as Chairman. He will, however, be continuing both as an EC member and as part of Allen's electrical team. He thanked everyone for their friendly helpful support during his tenure as Chairman.

Finally, Mr Henry thanked all the members for their attendance at the meeting and for all the background work and support that keeps the museum thriving.

## **5 Treasurers Report and Approval of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024**

Mrs Herriott, Treasurer, advised members that Mr John Youngs had retired as Treasurer, due to ill health, at the end of the 2023 – 24 financial year and delivered his report as follows:

Unfortunately, admission income was down from previous years entirely due to a very wet and poor Easter (2023) at £1.8k compared to a usual average of £5k. Other income brought the year up to a similar figure to the prior year.

Project expenditure was higher than previous years as, at long last, we refurbished the concrete workshop. Whilst this doesn't improve the site for visitors it does for the hard-working volunteers. We continued to uprate site electrics while we still have elderly volunteers capable of such highly skilled work. Overall, we spent a larger sum on maintenance than most years. Our admin costs stayed fairly constant, except for rent. Our rent reduction scheme has finished and so we are now paying nearer market rent.

Due to the poor Easter and the high spend on maintenance the final surplus of income over expenditure was only £4116 compared to £12k for 2023.

Our Balance Sheet remains strong at £144k of which £124k is cash. I now leave our finances in the capable hands of Lesley Herriott who has been my deputy over the last few years and expect she will continue to see the museum and the balance sheet grow from strength to strength.

Mrs Herriott went on to extend her thanks to John Youngs for all the years that he has put in at the museum as Treasurer. She felt that he will be a hard act to follow but advised members that she will endeavour to do her best. Mrs Herriott had agreed at the Financial Management Working Party meeting to take on the Treasurer's position provided that John was on hand to answer her queries and that the museum appointed a firm of accountants to produce the quarterly and annual accounts with information supplied by her. This has been done and is working out very well.

Mrs Herriott also extended her thanks to Paul Theobald & Andrew Street who have taken on the responsibility for overseeing reception, providing cover and the training of volunteers to run it on Open Days as she is not always able to attend.

As it is early days working with the accountants, Mrs Herriott has committed to stay on as Treasurer until the end of March 2026 so that she will be able to hand over a smoothly operating procedure to the next post holder.

It was proposed that the Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2024 be accepted by the members.

Proposed: Mr Bill Barnard  
Seconded: Mr Keith Harrap  
Accepted by unanimous vote.

## 6 Museum Manager's Reports

Mr Farrar, Museum Manager, advised members that this year marks the 51<sup>st</sup> year in the life of Pitstone Museum. When it first opened to the public, it was very much a farm-based attraction and was popular with the locals who came along on two-day Open Days to see what was on offer.

The volunteers organising the event were mainly farm-based enthusiasts who, true to form for their generation, recently freed from the rigours of wartime life, hated to see perfectly good tools and equipment going to waste. It seems like every potential empty space was filled with redundant farm equipment waiting to be recycled. They even used to demonstrate the grinding of corn into flour, in the stone mills located the mill barn at the top end of the big barn.

It is hoped that the originators of the museum would be happy with what has been achieved in the first 50 years. Although there are now aspects of the museum which have little to do with farming, several generations of volunteers have added to the appeal of the place, without spoiling the atmosphere, and we need to be very careful to carry on the traditions laid down over 50 years, at the same time as we adjust to living with the new aspects of the digital age.

Our ongoing projects are progressing satisfactorily and our volunteers have been bolstered by several new faces who all seem to be fitting in well. Mr Farrar welcomed them to the Museum and expressed his hope that they all enjoy their time as a volunteer.

One aspect of our organisation that affects the way we operate is the spiralling age of our workforce. We have many volunteers in their eighties and several having to retire due to ill health. Mr Farrar expressed sincere thanks to them for their hard work and support over many years, particularly Roy Cutler (1940s room), John Youngs (Treasurer), Sandra & Bill Barnard (archives & memberships) and Jim Whinnett, who has been driving the tractor & trailer for the rides to the windmill for over 40 years.

The Secretary reported that publicity through Facebook is ongoing and receives good feedback, and extended thanks to Mr Richard Bysouth for the organisation of the PIMS talks. Mr Farrar advised members that the signs for Open Days will be refurbished during the closed season but that we have to ensure that we remain within some very strict guidelines.

## 7 Membership report

Mr Bill Barnard, Membership Secretary reported that there had been a small increase on membership numbers from 2023 to 2024 as follows:

	2024	2023
Life members	9	9
Volunteers	93	91
Paying Members	77	76
Total	179	176

## 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

Mrs Patschinsky, Secretary advised members that she has received nominations for the posts of Officers and Executive Committee Members as follows:

Mr Henry has retired as Chairman and Mr Pete Farrar has been nominated to be elected as Chairman:

Proposed: Mr Rob Barber  
Seconded: Mrs Barbara Barber  
Approved by unanimous vote.

The remaining existing Officers have been nominated to be re-elected en bloc as follows :

Secretary	Mrs Gillian Patschinsky
Treasurer	Mrs Lesley Herriott
Vice-Chairman	Mr John Powell

Proposed: Mr Bill Barnard  
Seconded: Mrs Sandra Barnard  
Approved by unanimous vote.

The remaining existing members of the Executive Committee have been nominated to be re-elected en bloc as follows:

Mr Rob Barber	Mr Simon Heaton
Mr Lionel Birch	Mr Rob Henry
Mr Paul Chapman	Mr David Kirkwood
Mr Allen Fairbrother	Mr John Youngs

Proposed: Mr Ray Herriott  
Seconded: Mr Barbara Barber  
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: Mr John Powell  
Seconded: Mr Rob Henry  
Approved by unanimous vote

**11 Members' Questions**

There were no questions from the members.

**12 Date and Time of the 2025 Annual General Meeting**

The 2025 Annual General Meeting will be held on

Thursday 16 October 2025, commencing at 3.00pm at Pitstone Green Museum

There being no further business the meeting closed at 3.40pm