

## THE DULWICH SOCIETY

### **DRAFT MINUTES of the 58<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021 via Zoom**

Present: 75 members, two non-members and three Southwark Dulwich Ward Councillors.

Apologies: Nichola McAuliffe; Councillor Andy Simmonds to attend part of the meeting.

#### 1. Introduction by Chairman (Ian McInnes)

The Chairman opened with the following statement:

“Good evening and welcome to this Dulwich Society AGM.

The Society’s intention had been to hold the AGM in the function room at the Crown and Greyhound in Dulwich Village on 14 September. The current rise in the rate of Covid-19 infections, and the knowledge that several residents who had been double vaccinated have still caught the virus, has led the Executive Committee to decide that a meeting in an enclosed room at this point would be inappropriate.

The Charity Commission has advised that virtual AGMs or SGMs are acceptable in the current circumstances, and the reasons for holding a virtual meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

Please make sure your full name appears on your screen as without it your vote will not be counted. The Society’s membership is based on individual households and each household has one vote.”

The Chairman said that the Minutes of the last AGM meeting, based on the Zoom recording, had been on the Society website for some time, along with the record of the online Chat and the full text of Questions submitted before the meeting and the Executive Committee’s response. The Financial Report and Accounts for 2020 were also on the website and it was hoped members had taken the opportunity to look at these documents.

The Chairman said that all participation by members on the Executive Committee, Sub-Committees and other activities is most welcome. At present, there is a need for volunteer journal distributors, particularly in the East Dulwich area. This would help reduce postage costs.

The Chairman announced that he would be standing down after 13 years. He thanked Colin Niven, Society President, who was also standing down after 10 years in the role. Colin had been a personal friend and great support to him in his role as Chairman. The

Society is also losing 4 members of the Executive Committee: Bernard Nurse, Angela Wilkes, David Roberts and Adrian Hill. All four have given excellent service to the Society as Executive Committee Members for over 10 years and in two cases for over 20 years.

- Bernard Nurse has made a great success of the Local History Group as Chair, with increasing amounts of research being reflected in Journal articles.
- Angela Wilkes has stepped down as Chair of the Wildlife Committee after 20 years, due to ill health. The Chairman wished her a speedy recovery.
- David Roberts took over as Chair of the Planning and Architecture Group 13 years ago and stood down earlier this year. He was thanked for maintaining high standards.
- Adrian Hill, the previous Chair of the Society from 2000-2008, has remained on the Committee as the member with legal expertise. He has decided the time is right to step down.

2. Minutes of the 57<sup>th</sup> AGM held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Approval of the Minutes was proposed by Jeremy Prescott and Seconded by George Hornby. The Minutes were approved on a show of hands. They will be formally signed at the next in-person Executive Committee.

3. Matters Arising – None

4. Chairman's Report and Review of the Year

The Chairman presented a slideshow illustrating some of the activities and achievements of the Society during the year, including:

- Transformation of the telephone box in the Village to house a defibrillator or as a library
- Working with builders to relocate the Dulwich Village stocks
- Levelling the pavement outside shops in the Village and trimming overgrown vegetation in Dulwich Wood Park
- Clearing hoardings of graffiti
- Working with others to achieve improvements to the McCulloch site prior to the commencement of work there.
- New, replaced and repaired benches and repaired posts and chains.
- Wheelchair access through the gate at Lovers' Walk
- Refurbishment of the postcard overseen by Kenneth Wolfe. It has now been moved to storage in Calton Avenue.
- Creation of a listening post with a recording about Edward Alleyn, which has been professionally scripted and read by an actor. This will be located next to Edward Alleyn's statue in the Old College Garden.

5. Approval of Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

The Treasurer spoke to a slide summarising the Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The full Annual Report and Accounts have been available on the website for some time.

The deficit for 2020 was £978 compared to £3,460 in 2019. Both income (£16,468) and expenditure (£16,256) were down on 2019 because of the curtailment of activities due to Covid.

Donations and grants are detailed in the Notes to the accounts. With some write-back of provision, this has resulted in a deficit of just under £1000 for the year. The bank balance at year end was £45,510 compared to £52,368 the previous year. Gift Aid, collected by the membership Secretary, was £2,374 for the year.

The motion to approve the Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 was proposed by Jeremy Prescott and seconded by James Thompson and was approved by 100% in online Poll 1, with 58 voting in favour and 2 abstentions.

6. Re-appointment of the Independent Examiner: Sally-Anne Jeffries, Chartered Accountant

The motion to re-appoint Sally-Anne Jeffries as Independent Examiner for 2021 was proposed by James Thompson and seconded by Joe Millis. The motion was approved by 100% in online Poll 2 with 60 voting in favour and 1 abstention. Sally-Anne Jeffries was duly appointed as Independent Examiner for 2021.

7. Retirement of the President – Dr Colin Niven OBE

Colin Niven is retiring as President after 10 years service. The Chair thanked him for his outstanding contribution to the Society.

8. Appointment of new President – Dr Kenneth Wolfe

Kenneth Wolfe, the current Vice Chairman, is standing as President. Kenneth is well-known locally and is the only candidate.

The appointment of Kenneth Wolfe as President was approved in online Poll 3 by 100% with 57 voting in favour and 4 abstentions. He was welcomed as new President.

9. Elections for 2021-2022 – Society Officers

Ian McInnes is stepping down after 13 years as Chairman and James Thompson is standing as Chairman, proposed by Jeremy Prescott and seconded by David Way. James

is Chair of the Stradella and Springfield Residents Association and a Residents Association representative on the Dulwich Estate Advisory Group.

Sue Badman has been Secretary of the Society for many years and is now standing as Vice Chairman, proposed by Ian McInnes and seconded by Sharon O'Connor.

Heather Stubbs, a former Secretary of the Friends of Dulwich Picture Gallery Committee and East Dulwich Resident, is standing as Secretary, proposed by Paul Butler and seconded by Judith Nurse.

Russell Lloyd is standing again as Treasurer, proposed by Gardner Thompson and seconded by Andrew Gould. He has been dealing with the accounts for 30 years and has been responsible for moving the financial records online.

The appointment of the Society Officers was approved by 95% in online Poll 4, with 58 voting in favour, 3 against and 3 abstentions. The Officers were welcomed to their new or continuing roles.

#### 10. Elections for 2021-2022 – Members of the Executive Committee

The proposed Executive Committee Members are:

##### Role – Name (Proposer name, Seconder name)

Membership Secretary - Diane McInnes (Paul Butler, Jean Howell)

Communications & Media – Sharon O'Connor (Jean Howell, Ian McInnes)

Journal Editor – Brian Green (Rita Green, Judith Ward)

Planning & Architecture – Penny Stern (Peter Hogarth, Margaret Bremer)

Travel & Environment – Harry Winter (Sue Badman, Ian McInnes)

Licensing – Patsy Bramble (Catrin Waugh, Diana McInnes)

Trees – David Beamish (Patricia Hole, Glynis Williams)

Local History - Ian McInnes (Bernard Nurse, Sharon O'Connor)

Gardens – Jeremy Prescott (Bill Streatfield, Ann Rutherford)

Peter Roseveare has recently been elected as Chair of the Wildlife Committee, replacing Angela Wilkes, but the election did not take place in time for him to be formally elected to the Executive Committee at this AGM. A motion will be put to the next meeting of the Executive Committee to co-opt Peter Roseveare with a view to him being formally elected at the next AGM.

The appointment of the Committee Members was approved by 93% in online Poll 5, with 56 voting in favour, 4 against and 4 abstentions. The Officers were welcomed to their new or continuing roles.

## 11. Any Other Business

- a) The Chairman said that, as agreed at the SGM on 28<sup>th</sup> June, Sub-Committee Minutes will be posted on the Society website as soon as they have been approved by the relevant Sub-Committee
- b) The Minutes of the SGM on 28<sup>th</sup> June will also be published on the website shortly. The results of the meeting and all motions and statements were published on the website immediately after the meeting.
- c) David Cianfarani had given notice that he wished to speak to the meeting about the Society's upcoming review of Rules to be undertaken by Patsy Bramble's Sub-committee convened for this purpose. David thanked Ian for his time as Chair and for the opportunity to speak. He said that during the summer it had been announced that a Sub-committee would be formed to review the Society's Rules and report in January 2022, when there would be a consultation with members and the proposed new Rules would be put forward for adoption at the AGM in April 2022 as per Note 2 of the AGM Notice. David said this was unsatisfactory as the new Rules would not take effect until the 2023 AGM. He had a set of oven-ready rule amendments for this AGM which would have had the necessary number of supporters. In his experience, rule changes at AGMs can dominate the meeting, confuse some and deter members from attending.

David proposed holding a Rule Amendment special meeting in January so that all the amendments can be in place prior to the April 2022 AGM. The Rules are not long and are mainly standard fare so a January date for this meeting is achievable.

David further added that 6 out of 10 of the newly elected Executive Committee Members were appointed as Chairs of their Sub-committee prior to the AGM as published on the website on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. All members are grateful for the work Committee Members carry out on a voluntary basis, but in future ordinary members should have a say in such appointments. Naming the Chairs so early can also deny Sub-committee Members the right to appoint their own Chair as per Rule 8. A new Rule is needed to ensure Committee Chairs are elected after rather than before the AGM. He concluded by saying it would strike a welcome chord with ordinary members and bring unity to the Society if the meeting to ratify the proposals of the Rules Sub-Committee could be brought forward to January and take account of input from ordinary members.

Ian McInnes said David Cianfarani's comments had been recorded and would be considered by Patsy Bramble and the Rules Sub-committee to decide whether his proposal would be adopted. He added that he, rather than the new Chair was responding to David's points as it was felt easiest in a Zoom meeting if the whole

meeting is controlled by one person. In future, however, the new Chair would be responding to the proposals.

- d) Brian Green noted that a large number of long-serving members who have given excellent service are leaving. This may seem like an orchestrated reshuffle, but in fact, to quote Harold MacMillan, it was “Events, dear boy, events” that had caused the exodus. Whilst ill health, accidents and age haven taken their toll for some , in Ian’s case it was the birth of a first grandchild and the re-introduction of international cruising which had triggered his departure. For 13 years, Ian has been Dulwich’s 4<sup>th</sup> emergency service, (pushing the AA into 5<sup>th</sup> place as cars no longer break down). It is to Ian that Dulwich residents have reported blocked street drains, fallen trees and anti-social behaviour and if he couldn’t resolve the problem himself, he knew a man or woman who could. It is great news that his services will not be lost altogether. As Chairman of the Local History Committee, he will be able to answer questions on such matters as ancient lights and garden rooms.

Brian thanked Ian for 13 years of excellent service and coupled this with thanks to his dear friend, Colin Niven, for his 10 years of splendid service as President.

Colin and Ian thanked Brian Green.

- e) The outgoing Chairman said the next AGM will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021, hopefully at an in-person meeting and thanked everyone for attending. An attendance of nearly 80 was most encouraging. He offered his best wishes for the future to the new Chairman and President and newly promoted Committee Members, and told the new Chairman he would be happy to answer any questions.
- f) The newly elected Chairman, James Thompson, added his thanks to Ian for his service and continuing involvement on the Committee. Ian’s shoes are very big, but he would do his best to fill them. He looked forward to the challenge and working with members of the Committee to further the aims of the Society.
- g) John Hedley praised the excellent quality of the electronic e-Newsletter and the Journal. The outgoing Chairman said that a new editor, Sharon O’Connor, is taking over the production of the e-newsletter and Brian Green remains as editor of the Journal. Further improvements could also be expected to the website soon.

The meeting ended at 20.37pm