



THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY

Minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting held on Wed 13 March
2019 at 7:45 pm

at the United Church Hall, Herne Hill

1. Welcome

Colin Wight, Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM. There were c.35 attendees.

Apologies for absence were received from

John Conway

Jeffrey Doorn

Martyn Hall

Julia Kirby-Jones

Mike Stirling

Dan Townsend

2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Copies of the minutes were available to attendees. The Chair reminded those attending that only paid-up members of the Society were eligible to vote. There were no matters arising from the minutes. It was moved by **Patrick Roberts** and seconded by **Rosalind Glover** that the minutes of the 2018 AGM be adopted as a true record. The motion was carried.

3. Chair's Report

Colin thanked all those who had contributed to making the year a success: the members of the Committee, but also and in no particular order

Sophia Marsh, for designing the magazine and *Grace's Story*

Beth Taylor, for leading on the History Hear project

Bil Harrison, our Transport expert

Robert Holden, for maintaining the two noticeboards

Rosalind Glover for scrutinising the accounts

Laurence Marsh, **Dan Townsend** and **John Conway**, without whom our First World War research project could not have happened.

In addition he conveyed the Society's thanks to all who served on the Planning Sub-Committee and everyone who wrote for, or helped distribute, the magazine.

Colin also extended his personal thanks to former Chair **Sheila Northover** and Hon. President **Bill Kirby**, for their continuing source of sound advice and practical assistance.

Turning to the Society's activities over the previous year, Colin reported that membership had declined from 323 in December 2017 to 309 in December 2018. He noted that the Society had not conducted a concerted recruitment campaign in 2018 which possibly explained the decline in numbers.

Colin noted however that for a small Society operating with an under-strength Committee, much had nevertheless been achieved over the last 12 months. This included

- publishing four issues of *Herne Hill Magazine*, all to schedule
- making a number of useful Small Grants
- securing **Helen Hayes MP** to give the Thomas Lynn Bristowe Lecture
- making further progress with the History Hear oral history project

This was in addition to:

- bookselling
- carrying out a varied events programme
- commenting on, and where appropriate, challenging Planning and Licensing applications in Lambeth and Southwark.

He singled out the Society's move to prevent Network Rail from demolishing The Flower Lady shop to make way for an electrical sub-station in summer 2018 - a campaign that had enjoyed strong support from Herne Hill Forum and local people in general. He noted that the Society had urged Lambeth to designate Station Square as a Conservation Area. The procedure was lengthy, but we hoped to see progress next year.

The Society's major achievement of 2018 was the Lottery-funded "Remembering Herne Hill 1914-18" project, which had produced an online database with descriptions of the lives and deaths of, to date, 404 casualties; and a delightful book, *Grace's Story*. The Society had also organised a short Armistice Centenary event at Herne Hill Station, which was well attended and widely reported.

Research into the 1914-18 casualties had been undertaken by a small team; if that team had been bigger the project would probably have been completed by now. He regretted that few members of the Society had taken part in the online research. There was still time to volunteer.

As every year, Colin concluded, we had sadly lost several members of the Society: chief amongst them, perhaps, **Patricia Jenkyns**, a former Chair, who had passed away only a few days ago at the age of 93.

4. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer who was abroad, a summary of the Society's annual accounts for 2018 was displayed on the screen and also in paper handouts which had been distributed to those attending the meeting. Colin drew attention to the main features, in particular the apparently large discrepancy between 2018 and 2017, caused by the grant of £5200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund being received in 2017 but not disbursed until 2018. There were queries from **John Brunton** (about how Gift Aid was being shown in the accounts), and from Honorary President **Bill Kirby** (about the miscellaneous expenditure item). It was agreed that these queries would be answered by the Treasurer when he returned to the country.

It was then proposed by John Brunton and seconded by **Gail Bourne** that the report and accounts should be adopted and by a show of hands this was agreed.

5. Committee retired

The 2018/19 Committee then stood down pending the election of a new committee.

6. Election of new Committee for 2018-19

Elections were conducted by John Brunton. The new Committee officers were nominated and seconded as follows:

Chair: Colin Wight, nominated by **Jeff Segal**, seconded by **Linda Casbolt**

Vice-Chair: Laurence Marsh, nominated by **Ian McInnes**, seconded by **David Williams**

Secretary: Pat Roberts, nominated by **Anne Langley**, seconded by **John Durham**

Treasurer: Martyn Hall, nominated by **Laurence Marsh** and seconded by **Jackie Plumridge**

Committee members elected were: **Henry Ferguson** (nominated by Patrick Roberts and seconded by Colin Wight), **Jackie Plumridge** (nominated by Martyn Hall and seconded by Henry Ferguson), and **Val Suebsaeng** (nominated by Liz Ochavagia and seconded by Rachel Wingard).

All nominees were elected unanimously by a show of hands.

7. Membership Survey

Colin Wight and **Patrick Roberts** presented a summary of the feedback received from the online survey of members. The Committee was grateful to all those who had taken the trouble to reply and in particular those who had completed the personal comments section in the survey: these observations were particularly helpful to the committee. Some salient findings of the survey were that 70% of the

members who replied were in the age range 61 or older; that of all the Society's activities, our Magazine received an overwhelming vote of confidence; and that research and publishing about local history, campaigning on environmental issues such as traffic, green spaces and public transport, and scrutiny of planning and licensing applications were also valued.

Colin added that the Committee remained understaffed. He and his colleagues were grateful for the various offers of help that had been made in response to the survey, which would be followed up promptly, but it remained the case that no one had so far volunteered to join the Committee. He himself, and he knew of other colleagues on the Committee of like mind, felt unable to continue on the committee beyond the next two years. So the Society would inevitably be facing some challenges if no-one came forward to take over the tasks now performed by the current Committee.

8. Any other business

Annie Gelly informed the meeting about the forthcoming AGM of the Friends of Carnegie Library & Carnegie Library Association with a recital by The Friends' Musick chamber choir.

Jeff Segal informed the meeting about the traffic speed monitoring project, principally on Half Moon Lane. **Carol Boucher** added that there was a similar project on the Lambeth side which she could advise on.

Robert Holden proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all their hard work.

9. Guest speaker Chris Smith

After an interval the meeting heard a report by **Chris Smith**, Chair of Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, on the history of the gardens in Brockwell Park, the development of the Community Greenhouses project, and their current programme of activities with schools, community groups, gardening volunteers and individuals.