

Bicester Local History Society

Annual General Meeting, Monday 16 September 2013, 19:30

MINUTES

Venue: The Clifton Centre, Ashdene Road, Bicester

Present: Fifty-seven BLHS members and three non-members

Apologies: John & Sue Leverton, John and Sue Bentley, Tony Kempton

Introduction

Bob Hessian opened the AGM at 19:40. He thanked members for attending, and outlined the format for the meeting. He then reviewed the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 17 September 2012. He informally asked members whether they were satisfied with The Clifton Centre as the new venue for BLHS monthly talks, and there was general agreement that it was a good and acceptable venue.

Secretary's Report

Pete Chivers highlighted the key achievements of the past year.

The move to The Clifton Centre as the new venue for monthly talks had been successfully achieved. The BLHS website had been updated with summaries of speaker- talks on a monthly basis, as well as other material to keep members up-to-date. In addition, a quarterly Newsletter to all members had been published, and regular articles had appeared in the Garth Gazette and Bicester Review. An exhibition in Sheep Street to accompany 'The Big Lunch' event had proved highly successful.

In August 2013 the long-awaited *BLHS Bicester Through Time Book* was published by Amberley Publishing, and the *Bygone Bicester DVD* was produced by the Society. Pete Chivers paid special tribute to Matthew Hathaway and Sally James for their sterling efforts in producing this DVD.

2013 also saw another impressive series of town, village, and countryside walks conducted by the Society. Looking ahead a few weeks, the Bicester History Day would be held on 28 September 2013 at the Methodist Church Hall, featuring many local history-related stands and highlighting the Alchester Tombstone.

Pete Chivers then previewed an extract from the new *Bygone Bicester DVD*, and this was very well received by members.

Chairman's Report

Bob Hessian summarised the key points from the year.

2013 had proved a good year with some excellent speakers at the monthly meetings. The Village and Countryside walks had been very successful. However the Town walks could have been better supported.

BLHS would be looking forward to working together with Bicester Heritage with its plans for the former RAF Bicester site.

The year had seen the opening of the major new town development in Bicester. The Kingsmere housing development was ongoing, and there had been no progress regarding the Eco Town development. The Eco House, previously located at The Garth, had been dismantled and taken to

Warwickshire. With the refurbishment of The Garth now completed, the Society would need to re-negotiate its archive storage requirement with Bicester Town Council.

Andy Taylor, Meg Latham, and Pete Chivers were stepping down from their roles on the Committee. Pete Chivers's departure would be a great loss to the Committee and BLHS members, and Bob Hessian paid special tribute to Pete for his exceptional work for the Society over so many years. Special thanks were also made to Andy Taylor and Meg Latham for their work on the BLHS Committee.

Mention was made of Gavray Drive, a set of historic meadows containing unspoilt hedgerows and undisturbed wildlife and plants. Several groups had joined together in an effort to preserve the historic meadows against the threat of development.

Treasurer's Report

Sally James summarised the Income & Expenditure of the Society for the year ending September 2013 (copies of the accounts had been circulated at the beginning of the meeting). The Society now had 125 members, the highest ever recorded membership. It was stressed that income from members' subscriptions was crucial to the Society. Sally James thanked Wendy and Mick Wall for their organisation of the monthly raffles. A grant for £500 had been received from Bicester Town Council towards the purchase of special storage boxes to hold and protect archived items. Sally James explained the differences in the financing of the Book and the DVD. The production costs of the Book were taken by the publisher, Amberley Publishing, with the Society receiving royalties from books that had been sold. The production costs of the DVD had been met by BLHS, so that revenue gained from sold copies of the DVD would appear in the following year's BLHS accounts (2013/14). The income/expenditure for 2012/13 resulted in an overall deficit in the accounts of £184.19. The amount of £3,779.37 was brought forward from 2011/2012, leaving total assets for the Society of £3,595.18.

Membership subscriptions had not risen since 2009, and because of the overall deficit in the Society's accounts for 2012/13, the Committee had recommended the following increases to annual subscriptions:

£12 (from £10) for Single Membership
£18 (from £15) for Joint Membership
£3 (from £2) for Visitors (per meeting)

The membership was asked to vote on each increase (three separate votes were taken) and all votes were carried in favour.

Election of new Committee

Bob Hessian commented that in order to adhere to constitutional rules, all existing Committee members were now asked to stand down. Bob Hessian then asked members if they were in agreement for him to take the role of Acting Chairman whilst the voting for new Committee members took place. Members agreed to this request.

The following Officers of the Committee and Committee members for 2013/14 were elected:

Chairperson:	Bob Hessian
Treasurer:	Sally James
Secretary:	Sally Dexter
Committee Members:	Gill King John Roberts Peter Crook

Bob Hessian then stated that, in accordance to the rules of the Society, the new Committee would then be able to co-opt further Committee members, without putting votes to the membership. He then outlined the new roles and responsibilities of the BLHS Committee members. The role of Secretary would now focus on administrative tasks, principally the production of minutes and agendas for meetings. This role would be carried out by Sally Dexter. Other tasks previously carried out by the Secretary would now be re-apportioned to other Committee roles. John Roberts would take on the new role of Membership Officer (previously carried out by the Treasurer), Gill King would take on the new role as Archivist, and the role of Talks Officer would continue to be carried out jointly by Sally James and John Roberts.

The new role of Publicity Officer was vacant, and Bob Hessian agreed to carry out this role on an interim basis. Future new roles of Website Advisor and Facebook Officer needed further discussion within the Committee. Once 2013/14 BLHS projects had been agreed, it was likely that each project would appoint its own Project Manager. Another vacant role was that of note-taker at the monthly speaker talks (a précis of the talks would then be added to the BLHS website). Bob Hessian appealed to members to join the Committee, either in one of the vacant roles or in an ex-officio role. He encouraged members to discuss their future participation with any member of the Committee.

Changes to the BLHS Constitution

Bob Hessian advised members that there were three proposed amendments to the BLHS constitution (these amendments are detailed clearly on the attached copy of the Constitution). Each of the three amendments were read out to members, and a separate vote was carried out for each amendment in turn. There were no objections, and all three amendments were passed.

AOB

Bob Hessian reported that the cost of the BLHS annual outing to Basingstoke on 4 October 2013 was likely to be reduced if the Society hired a minibus instead of a coach. Members who had not yet decided on whether to attend this event were encouraged sign up during the evening.

The AGM was then brought to a close. After a break for refreshments and the raffle, there followed a brief talk on the history of Morris dancing and a demonstration of dances and steps by the Kirtlington Morris Dancers. The meeting finished at 10:00 pm.

Enclosure:

BLHS Constitution with track changes showing the amendments agreed at the 2013/14 AGM, held on 16 September 2013.

Circulation of AGM Minutes: 2013 BLHS Committee Members

Sally Dexter
30 September 2013