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**MINUTES of the 74<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Held in the Town Hall on 14 May, 2019**

The Society's Chairman, Crispin Davies, welcomed 39 members to the Society's 74th Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman said that our President, Doug Amans, was unable to attend but sends his best wishes to the Society and to its members. The meeting reciprocated those wishes. The Chairman continued that as well as the formalities of any annual meeting members would be told what the Society has done over the last year, what it will be doing in the next 12 months and giving members the chance to tell the Committee what it should be doing both in the next year and for the Society's 75th Anniversary on 1 February 2020.

**THE FIFTH CONTINENT LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME – PRESENTATION BY DAWN APCAR**

The Chairman introduced Dawn Apar who spoke about the project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Ingoldsby Legends (1837) recognised the importance of Romney Marsh as a fifth continent through the statement "The world, according to the best geographers, is divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Romney Marsh". The Fifth Continent Landscape Partnership Scheme seeks to deliver a number of exciting projects based around three key themes to Restore, Rediscover and Reclaim Romney Marsh.

Following the illustrated talk Dawn answered questions from members.

**PRESENTATION OF THE CAPON SHIELD**

A Society member, Annette Armour, suggested that the redevelopment of the Cannon Newman Hall in Dental Street should be recognised. The owners wanted the project itself and the home they were building to have as little environmental impact as possible. So they have retained or repurposed as much of the original fabric of the building as possible and constructed an environmentally sustainable roof. The exterior of the redevelopment features a wonderful Kentish ragstone wall.



The Chairman presented Jules and Lore Boyd with the Capon Shield and a ceramic plaque to be placed on the building as a permanent fixture.

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies received from 19 members.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL MEETING**

The minutes of the 2018 meeting have been published on the Society's website and summarised in the June/July 2018 Newsletter. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### **MATTERS ARISING**

At the 2018 annual general meeting Chris O'Connor proposed that the Society considers a review of the Hythe Conservation Area as part of a national initiative led by Civic Voice (our national body). This is being pursued.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Alan Joyce reported on the Society's finances at 31 March 2019. The accounts show a deficit of some £2,700 which the Treasurer explained by referring to the changes in both income and expenditure during the year. There were no questions and the accounts were approved.

#### **ACTIVITY REPORTS**

Committee members each lead on an area of interest to them. In previous years each has given his or her individual report. This year the Committee decided to let the Chairman report on the wide range of activities on their behalf.

#### **Membership (Lead - Alan Joyce)**

Alan Joyce reports that at the end of March 2019 there were 752 members – a reduction of two compared with March 2018.

#### **Membership Group (Lead -Kim Merton)**

The Membership Group of 4 Committee members are investigating ways to make the residents of Hythe more aware of the Society. The Committee wishes to reach out to those who may not have heard of us– particularly those of a younger age group. The Committee will be publicising the Society's activities more widely. The larger our membership the greater our voice!

#### **Talks (Lead - Betty Black)**

The "Talks Team" (Betty Black, Ian Hill, Evelyn Joyce, and Jim Twist) arranged a varied programme of talks which were mostly very interesting and well received. The Team aims to organise a very varied programme with something for everyone. The Team has a really interesting programme lined up for next year which includes something for everybody....from Pocahontas to The Bayeux Tapestry, The Pleasure Gardens Theatre, Folkestone to Goldenhurst and its celebrity occupants (including Noel Coward and Julian Clary). Thanks were expressed to Ian Hill who is standing down from the Talks Team after 15 years.

#### **Events (Lead - Betty Black)**

The Summer Outing to Bletchley Park, the home of the WW11 code breakers, was enjoyed by almost 50 members & friends. The Autumn Lunch was attended by some 55 members and friends with Barry Hammond giving a most interesting insight into the organisation of the Hythe Festival. The Christmas Social Evening was held at the Hythe Sports Pavilion with mulled wine and mince pies and with carols sung by the choristers from St Leonard's Church under the leadership of Dr. Berkeley Hill.

#### **Newsletter (Lead - David Hammond)**

During the year David took over editorship of the bi-monthly newsletter from Chris Melchers. 6 issues were circulated during the year.

#### **Hythe Local History Group (Lead - Anne Petrie)**

Research into the Deedes family is now complete and written up with footnotes. Work on rationalising the archives continues with discussions about digitising the bulk of the papers. The Group received a grant from District Councillor Michael Lyons to acquire an external hard drive to store all its own research and photos. This material will include a good selection of historical maps of the local area and Denise Rayner's History of Hythe 1850-1920. The research towards the World War One commemoration, also funded by a grant from Cllr Michael Lyons, led to biographies of the fallen of Hythe & Saltwood being displayed in High Street shop windows and being published in a book. The book contained a foreword from the Society's Patron - The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Boyce. Saltwood School pupils made poppies and an exhibition about the town and the war was staged in the library.

The Buildings Group continue to visit and record local houses of historic interest. At St Leonard's church, work is continuing to record the memorials in the church and a new project has started to photograph medieval graffiti.

For the future, there is talk of a permanent Portex/Smith's Medical exhibition in the History Room at Oaklands, work is underway on the history of houses at Pedlinge and a group is discussing the history of West Hythe.

### **Archives (Lead - Alan Joyce)**

The contents of the Society's archives, in a box room in Oaklands, are continuously being catalogued.

### **Town Centre Projects (Lead - Sally Chesters)**

The work on Mackeson Square has largely been completed. Investigations have commenced into additional locations for information boards.

### **Hythe in Bloom (Lead - Sally Chesters)**

The planters in Prospect Road and the High Street brought wonderful colour to the town in both summer and winter. The colour theme proved very popular with everyone including the judges from the South and South East in Bloom Competition. HiB entered the Parishes in Bloom category of the South and South East in Bloom Competition – the first time for many years – and were deemed worthy of a Silver- Gilt Award! Buoyed up by this success HiB plans to enter the main competition in 2020. Thanks were given to all the many sponsors and to the wonderful team of volunteer planters and waterers – but more volunteers would be greatly welcomed.

"The Friends of Sandling Station", a partnership between Hythe in Bloom and Saltwood Village Society, has continued its work. There are regular working sessions and The Friends are always looking for more volunteers.

### **Guided Walks (Lead - Sally Chesters)**

304 individual walkers took part over the summer season. 145 of those attended during Festival week. For comparison numbers in 2017 were 302. There were 2 new guides for the 2018 season.

### **Trees (Lead – Alan Joyce)**

The Society continues to help its members with tree issues working alongside the FHDC's Arboriculture Officer.

### **St Leonard's Churchyard (Lead –Alan Joyce)**

The joint Society/PCC team, plus other volunteers, has met regularly over the last year to carry out maintenance work in the churchyard.

### **Eaton Lands (Lead – Alan Joyce)**

The Society and the Hythe Environmental Community Group (formally Transition Hythe) has obtained consent from the Trustees to plant a community orchard in the autumn. Affinity Water granted £1,750 to this project.

### **Cycling (Lead – Alan Joyce)**

The Folkestone to Dungeness coastal cycle route has a gap from St Leonards Road to Reachfields. This is under review. The section from Martello Lakes to the Redoubt has been put on hold for funding reasons.

### **Publications (Lead – Alan Joyce)**

This year the Society has published the Local History Group's First World War publication and has re-printed "The Last Days of Hythe Harbour" by Maurice Young.

#### **Website (Lead – Ian Hill)**

The new website is doing well with an average of 900 visits a month.

#### **Planning (Lead – Crispin Davies)**

The Society submitted comments on the Review of the Core Strategy Local Plan which detailed a substantial increase in the number of housing units to be built and included Otterpool Park Garden Town. The Society submitted 12 comments to the Places and Policies Local Plan Submission Draft. The Society will be represented at the forthcoming Examination in Public in May.

The Society has objected to the hybrid planning application for development on Princes Parade. A request to the Government for it to decide the application, rather than FHDC, was turned down. The Committee is very aware that its constitution allows it to comment on matters of public benefit only in the civil parish of Hythe. Therefore the Society has commented on the effect that Otterpool is likely to have on Hythe and its residents -additional traffic, access to the M20 at Junction 11, competition for Hythe High Street, and the possible need for additional parking in Hythe to allow the High Street to benefit from additional footfall.

The Committee continues to scrutinise planning applications – welcoming some, opposing some and suggesting changes to others.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Committee shares its work between its members who are a wonderful group of volunteers who contribute positively to the Society and to the community life of Hythe for the benefit of all. There remains much to be done and there are challenges ahead - some may say that these are opportunities! - Princes Parade, Otterpool Park Garden Town, a possible lorry park at junction 11 on the M20, the revision to the Core Strategy and the current Examination in Public of the Local Plan.

The Society continues to work in partnership with a number of other organisations such as the Hythe Town Council and the Hythe Environmental Community Group on Eaton Lands – both the wild flower meadow and the embryo community orchard; with Saltwood Village Society on "Remembering 1918"; at Sandling Station; and, with KCC Highways on bulb planting. These are just some examples.

Thanks were given to those who help the Society financially and by sponsorship – for example: The Hythe Venetian Fete Society; District Councillor ward grants; sponsors of Hythe in Bloom; and, the Sainsbury's s106 Town Centre fund.

On 1 February 2020 the Society will be 75 years old. A cause for celebration! But how will the anniversary be celebrated? The Chairman invited ideas from those present either immediately or in the next few weeks.

In early May there were local elections. The Society thanked all those who put their names forward for election. The Society especially thanked those who were not re-elected for their contributions to Hythe over the last 4 years, or more, either as a District or as a Town Councillor or as both.

The Chairman thanked those present and all the other Society members for their continuing support and encouragement, to commend the Committee for its unstinting work and enthusiasm and to thank all the volunteers who make the Society the success it is. The Society will continue to do its best to make Hythe a better place for all.

#### **ELECTIONS**

**Chairman** – Chris Melchers took the chair and announced that Crispin Davies had been nominated by the Committee. There were no other nominations. By a show of hands Crispin Davies was duly elected.

#### **Vice Chairman, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary**

The Chairman announced that Betty Black, Alan Joyce and Mary Hunter respectively had been nominated by the Committee. There were no other nominations. By a show of hands they were duly elected. The Chairman paid tribute to Christopher Melchers who had stood down as Vice Chairman.

**Executive Committee**

The Chairman announced that Jane Twist was standing down. He presented Jane with some flowers to recognise her past service to the Society. During the year David Hammond had been co-opted to the Committee. The Chairman reported that Sally Starbuck had put her name forward for election. Sally Chesters, David Hammond, Ian Hill, Christopher Melchers, Kim Murton, Anne Petrie, Sally Starbuck and Michael Tubman had all been nominated. There were no other nominations. By a show of hands all were duly elected.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No items have been notified.

The Chairman asked if there were any suggestions on how the Society may celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 but there were no immediate suggestions.

Mike Umbers raised the issue of the small turnout for the 2018 Autumn Lunch. The Chairman said that the Committee would try and organise a lunch for 2019.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed: .....

Crispin Davies (Chairman)

Date: 12 May 2020