



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018 MINUTES

Minutes of the 107th Annual General Meeting of the Society of Genealogists held at the Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1M 7BA on Tuesday, 26 June, 2018, at 6.30pm. 49 Members were recorded as being present.

President of the Society, Patric Dickinson, LVO, MA, FSG, Clarenceux King of Arms, took the Chair.

1. The Chairman reported that a notice of the minutes of the 106th Annual General Meeting had been circulated in the *Genealogists' Magazine* and had been published on the Society's website. He pointed out that the Trustees had already approved the Minutes but they were provided for information at the meeting.
2. The Chairman then invited the Members to note the Auditors' report on page 16 of the Annual Report. He highlighted that the Auditors were satisfied that the Society's Accounts gave a true and fair view of the financial position.
3. Mrs Angela Buckley, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented the Annual Report of the Trustees for 2017. She reported that it had been an excellent year for the Society. Financial stability had been retained thanks to good management by June Perrin and all the staff. Alas, due to illness our Treasurer was unable to attend, but it was hoped that any queries, if not answered by those present, would be given an answer by e-mail.

There was little to report on the airspace lease. The planning permission application had been submitted but some important issues had been raised by Islington Borough Council and it had been withdrawn. It is not known what their concerns were, but we are keeping the situation under constant review. Any significant movements will be imparted to members and we remain committed to act in the best interests of the Society and its members.

The current situation regarding membership numbers and the need to retain new members remains paramount as being the main stream of our income and we continue to seek and offer valuable services and greater benefits by means of education, fellowship, data and special collections. A Membership Working Group has been set up to pinpoint areas in which we can improve our markets.

The development of the website continues and the new members' area offers many excellent opportunities for family historians. Courses are being developed and new tutorials added each month – all free to members. Mrs Buckley urged the Members to try them out.

Mrs Buckley also updated the meeting on the Society's commitment to compliance with the new Data Protection Legislation. Work has commenced on the business and membership data as the first phase.

Else Churchill and Lori Weinstein have continued to deliver an outstanding programme of courses, lectures, visits and walks. Our collaboration with Pharos remains strong. The advanced course had now been accredited by AGRA. Later this summer there is the Secret Lives conference to look forward to.

A new head of Library Services, Francisca Mkandawire, has taken over in the past few months and is now contributing to the Library developments.

We have had an excellent first year working with our new Trustees who brought a wealth of experience and expertise to the Society. This is now a stable board on which we can build for the future.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees she thanked the Members for their unstinting commitment to the Society, which is always appreciated. Coming now to the end of her tenure as Trustee she gave special thanks to June Perrin and all the staff, to fellow Trustees and all those who have supported her during her time on the board.

The Chairman then invited questions on the Accounts and Report of the Board of Trustees.

Question: Following an examination of the proposed building work, concern was expressed as to the number of floors and units to be built. Answer: The change to the original plan had been noted and was being kept under review by the Building Development Working Group. On the same topic, a query was raised as to whether a further valuation would be necessary considering the length of time since the previous one; again, this was under review.

Question: There was a query raised as to the absence of the Chief Executive Officer. Answer: It was stated she was on annual leave.

Question: The loss of some of the Society's valuable unique collections to FindMyPast was raised together with the lack of a figure for the income arising from this loss of material. Answer: The collections were also available to members on SoGData online and more material of a similar nature was going exclusively on this site. The contract with FMP was reviewed annually and the income was always considered at that time. Members expressed concern that they were unable to say whether the contract was good or bad value without a sight of the figures. There were repeated requests that at least the income figure should be made available. Post meeting note: This is not possible due to a confidentiality clause in the contract, the Society would risk being sued if they disclose any figures.

Question: The ongoing reduction in membership numbers was causing concern as this meant a continuing reduction of income and was felt to be unsustainable. Over the past ten years membership had fallen by nearly 2,000. Answer: It was pointed out that the rate of loss was slowing and that a dedicated Working Group had taken this on board and would be reporting to the Trustees at their AGM next week.

Question: Figures for the new membership structure were requested. Answer: These had not yet been fully analysed. This was felt to be disappointing and the rise in the cost of full membership may lead to a membership figure of below 9,000. Special joining offers were queried as it was believed that this resulted in people joining for just one year, and not renewing. One way to keep new members was to ensure that there was a continuous stream of new data being added to the Society's web-site together with other benefits.

Question: A request to make the web-site more user friendly was noted. Answer: This would be reviewed in the light of the current contract.

There being no further questions, the Chairman invited a Member of the Society to propose the resolution to approve the Annual Report: this was proposed by Mr. Stephen Chastelle and seconded by Mrs. Jan Gow. There were 40 votes in favour with 2 against. The proposal was approved with the addition of 145 proxies in favour, with one proxy vote withheld.

The Chairman also invited a Member of the Society to propose the resolution to approve the Annual Accounts: this was proposed by Mr. Frank Hardy, FSG, and seconded by Mr. Chris Broomfield. There were 39 votes in favour, two against, two abstentions. The proposal was approved with the addition of 145 proxies in favour, with one proxy vote withheld.

4. Mrs. Diane Swinfield proposed the resolution to appoint the Auditors and authorising the Board of Trustees to fix their remuneration. This was seconded by Mr. Stephen Chastelle. There were 44 votes in favour with one against and approved with the addition of 145 proxies in favour.

5. The Chairman announced that Mrs. Angela Buckley was retiring at the end of her six-year term, Tom Coppin had resigned. The Chairman thanked Angela Buckley for her years of service. Moving on to the appointment of Trustees, he reported that there were four vacancies on the Board.

Miss. Amelia Bennett retired by rotation after her three-year term and being eligible offered herself for re-election. Mr. Ray O'Connell offered himself for election. Short biographies had been supplied to Members with the AGM papers. The Chairman reported that as there were enough vacancies for the nominees, no election was necessary. The new Trustees stood up to introduce themselves to the meeting.

The Chairman announced the award of a Certificate of Appreciation to Angela Buckley.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Angela Buckley, announced the award of Certificates of Appreciation to: Mike Cooper; Graham Ford; Sue Gibbons; David Horwill; Oliver Levy; Jo McGlynn; Nick Newington-Irving; Val Palmar; Alan Pursell; Alison Ross; Neville Taylor; Barbara Tomlinson; Marcus Turner and Grant White. Those present received their certificates and they were all congratulated.

6. The Chairman reported that there will be no announcement of new Fellows this year. Dr. Colin Chapman, FSG then gave details of the closing date for nominations, 1 November 2018 which would then be voted on at the Fellows AGM on 11 December 2018.

Dr. Colin Chapman, FSG, also announced that no Certificates of Recognition for 2017 had been awarded to either individuals or organisations who have contributed significantly to genealogy. He reminded members that nominations can be submitted by 1 February 2019, and encouraged members to do so. Last year's recipients: The Australian Society of the Lacemakers of Calais and Mr. Peter Pretlove had been presented with their awards

The Chairman announced that this year the Prince Michael of Kent Award would be awarded to Cyndi Ingle for the creation of Cyndi's List. It was hoped to make the presentation in person at a suitable event next year.

7. There being no other competent business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.29pm

Informal Session

An informal session was held for Members. Things presented for consideration were; A special thank you was made to Mrs. Sue Lumas who after many years of dedicated work for the Society was retiring and moving to Suffolk. The number of vacancies on the Board was queried and this was under review seeking to match Trustees with required skills. The need for members to be allowed to have a say and put ideas to the Trustees was requested. It was felt that there was a need for a greater level of communication with the members and the possibility of a get-together should be vigorously pursued. An affirmation that the air space development would take place could not be given at the present time.

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