



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019 MINUTES

Minutes of the 108th Annual General Meeting of the Society of Genealogists held at the Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, London EC1M 7BA on Tuesday, 25 June, 2019, at 6.30pm.

46 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 107th 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 previous Minutes but they were provided for information at the meeting.
2. The Chairman then invited the Members to note the Auditors' report on page 17 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. Mr Ed Percival, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented the Annual Report of the Trustees for 2018. He reported that it had been a mixed year with major changes required to take the Society forward.

Thanks were given to Angela Buckley who retired at last year's AGM and the foundations she has laid by installing a Board of Trustees with an impressive range of professional skills..

He also reported on the current situation with diminishing members and income, with staff constantly stretched to continue to deliver all the services we offer is not sustainable. He highlighted new models and ways of working have to be found and the importance of involving the members being recognised and surveys being made available to gather as much feedback as possible. There are ongoing working parties looking at IT and the Collections with Member involvement too. He stated we need to know as much as possible about what you the Member wants from the Society moving forward.

He went on to say that the next stage of the Society's evolution depends on the Members' support. We need to take the chance to become an organisation that Genealogists' appreciate and want to belong to.

Members were urged to complete the survey online to ensure we have as much feedback as possible. It can be found under the 'about' section of the website. There will also be further surveys focusing on specific topics.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees he thanked Laura Doyle for her work as treasurer, Due to work commitments, she has had to relinquish this role but remains a valued member of the Board. Ray O'Connell has agreed to fill the role of treasurer. He also thanked Sue Hourizi, who having completed her second three year term has now finished her time on the Board. Thanks were also extended to June Perrin, the staff, volunteers and last but certainly not least, the Members for their support in our work.

The Chairman then invited Neil Allcock to read the treasurers report in the absence of the treasurer.

First an apology was issued due to an error in the summarised accounts. The group income shown on page 19 of the summarised report and set of accounts should have read £734,785 and not £601,305. The full signed accounts published on the website are correct.

The Society had set a deficit budget for 2018 but due to legacies received there was a surplus of £78,000. It was once again acknowledged that legacy income cannot be relied on and that the Society, as previously mentioned by the Chairman, is looking at its future Strategy to ensure a sustainable future. Several working groups had taken place during the year to look at Membership, Fundraising, IT and the Collections all working towards this aim.

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

Question: could we have the current Membership figures?

The Chief Executive reported that, as of 25 June 2019, the figures were 8,250 which includes 427 Associate Members. In future annual reports, the Associate Members and Full Members figure will be shown separately.

Question: Could we have a breakdown of the lecture fees as the position looks very different from last year?

The Chief Executive reported that this was due to the Conference income and Expenditure which was held in September and the 2018 accounts having a sum received for the 'Who Do You Think You Are Live Show'. It had been reported in previous years that the sum for the show could not be disclosed due to a confidentiality clause in the agreement. The Chief Executive agreed an accompanying note could have been included with the accounts. If the question had been asked in advance the Chief Executive could have asked the partners in the conference permission to full disclosure on the Conference income and expenditure but she did not have this permission. She also reported the events were always at a cost situation rather than a gain as all overheads had to be fairly allocated including staff wages and floor space.

Question: Had gift aid been looked at on the subscriptions and different types of membership?

The Society gives too many benefits to be able to reclaim gift aid on the subscriptions. Things like access to the library, online data, online education etc. all amount to far more than is allowable under tax rulings. However different levels and types of membership had been discussed and considered as part of the Membership working group.

Question: Could non-members be included in the surveys?

The Chief Executive reported that the survey goes out to all who sign up for information from us and we have already had some non-members completing the survey. The last general survey had a very healthy non-member response which is helpful.

Question: Should our bankers address be changed?

Although the physical bank has closed, this is still our official banking address. The Chief Executive will get in touch with our relationship manager to see if the Head Office address should be used instead.

Question: What was the amount of the largest legacy?

The Chief Executive reported that the largest legacy was £50,000 but this was just an estimated interim figure (as now required by accounting standards) and this could change when the legacy is finally settled.

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. Frank Hardy, FSG and seconded by Dr. Richard Sturt. There was a full majority in favour with none against. The proposal was approved with the addition of 73 proxies all in favour.

The Chairman also invited a Member of the Society to propose the resolution to approve the Annual Accounts: this was proposed by Mr. Julian Duffus and seconded by Dr. Colin Chapman, FSG. There was a full majority in favour with none against. The proposal was approved with the addition of 73 proxies all in favour.

Dr. Maurice Bierbrier, FSG, proposed the resolution to appoint the Auditors and authorising the Board of Trustees to fix their remuneration. This was seconded by Mr. Chris Broomfield, FSG. There was a full majority in favour with none against. The proposal was approved with the addition of 73 proxies all in favour.

4. The Chairman announced that Mrs. Sue Hourizi was retiring at the end of her six-year term, The Chairman thanked Sue for her years of service. Moving on to the appointment of Trustees, he reported that there were five vacancies on the Board.

Miss Laura Doyle retired by rotation after her three-year term and being eligible offered herself for re-election. Mr. Neil Allcock and Mr. Graham Walter offered themselves for election. Short biographies had been supplied to Members on the proxy voting form. 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 Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ed Percival, announced the award of Certificates of Appreciation to: Sue Hourizi, Esther Leeves, Elizabeth Richards and Jill Zucker. Those present received their certificates and they were all congratulated.

5. The Chairman reported that there will be no announcement of new Fellows this year but nominations had been informed for November and these will be announced at the next AGM.

Dr. Colin Chapman, FSG, announced that two Certificates of Recognition for 2018 had been awarded to either individuals or organisations who have contributed significantly to genealogy. However we were awaiting notification of their acceptance. These will be reported at the Christmas Social in December and in the Magazine and newsletter.

The Chairman announced that this year there is no Prince Michael of Kent Award.

There being no other competent business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.08pm.

Informal Session

An informal session was held for Members. Things presented for consideration were;

- A member reported on a new format being introduced to include the country in Genealogical enquiries to ensure accuracy. The United Kingdom is being used and this is not a country and may cause confusion. She urged people to have their say with any organisations introducing it as it may hamper results
- An update on the roof development was requested. This is no longer going ahead due to lack of planning permission.
- A member suggested looking at us becoming a part of the British Library. It was felt this was unlikely due to our different operating status (the British Library being a public body and we a Charity). The Chairman reported that any merger we did had to be with a likewise organisation (e.g. a charitable organization).
- One member stated that they agreed with everything said but urged us to move faster.
- A suggestion was made to use the Rootstech London event as an opportunity to attract more members. The Society is holding special lectures and open days either side of the event and special promotional material will be produced and distributed. It was suggested we approach speakers we know to 'bang the Society drum'.

- It was suggested we be more pro-active in the monthly magazines. We do get a regular appearance in these and are often contributing to editorial.
- It was asked if the collections review will talk to the people who volunteer in the archiving section and this was confirmed.
- A suggestion was made to put some of our material on display at events. This will be followed up.
- A question was asked on whether we are a Library or an Archive and the CEO stated that we are both (e.g. a hybrid).
- Suggestions were also made on updating our You Tube channel with how to use the library, etc. This will be followed up.
- It was asked if the meetings we have could sometimes be held in the evenings for workers (e.g. the Library User Forum). The next one will be held later. Another member suggested making them webinars so more could join in.
- One member requested we do not spend vast sums on the building as it is not fit for purpose and that we look at a better facility with more virtual facilities for people.
- Another member reported that, although in favour of a new building, they felt the library to be key and should be retained.
- Confirmation was given that the survey can be found under the 'About' section of the website.

The discussion and feedback was very useful and comments will be included in the Strategy deliberations.

Patron: HRH Princess Katarina of Yugoslavia

Chief Executive Officer & Company Secretary: Mrs J. PERRIN

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