

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Wiltshire Local History Forum

at Bromham Village Hall on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017

43 members attended.

**Apologies** were received from Gillian Sheldrick, Graham Bathe & Ruth Newman.

**Matters arising**. None.

**Chair's Report**. In 2016 we had two successful meetings. The Spring Conference was held at Bromham on the theme of brewing. The October Conference was held at the History Centre in Chippenham & focussed on online resources.

Our Chairman has attended a meeting of the Dorset Local History Network. The Dorset group has encountered similar difficulties to us in recruiting both members & committee members & they were interested to hear about our experiences. A group discussion followed, thinking about the future & what the aims & aspirations should be. The biggest challenge is how to engage with more people who are or might be interested in local history. Social media is an important communication tool but not everyone has the skills to use it. This is where we can benefit from being part of a group, where we will potentially have a wider range of skills to draw on. Other ideas were organising family events,

running writing competitions & attracting young people (the biggest challenge of all!). Claire was very encouraged by this meeting & found it a useful experience. She was also pleased that two of the Dorset members were able to attend our AGM.

The 2017 autumn conference will be held at Shrewton on October 7<sup>th</sup> & the theme will be water courses.

**Treasurer's Report.** The bank account balance on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 was £7,989.15. Currently our subscription year is from April – March & the financial year is from Jan – Dec. This causes some confusion & the treasurer would like to change our financial year to match subscriptions. This was proposed by Mary Ross-Gower & seconded by Dennis Powney. The adoption of the accounts was formally proposed by Mike Marshman, seconded by Jean Belt and carried unanimously. The Forum has 85 members.

**Newsletter Editor's report.** The editor currently produces two editions a year, but it can be a challenge as so few people contribute. The editor reminded us that all contributions are gratefully received, even short pieces. Both printing & postage costs are high, over £500 for each one; at some point in the future members may receive their copy by email.

**Web Editor's report.** Julie has worked very hard on designing a new Word Press site. It is more user friendly & links easily to social media. Julie hopes to write an article each week, which she hopes will attract a good number of hits to ensure the site is ranked highly on Google. The site will be promoting events & local group meetings & Julie encouraged members to let her know about any future events.

**Election of Officers for 2017-2018.** At this point Claire asked Julie to take the Chair & ask if there were any nominations for Chairman. Claire Skinner was proposed by Dennis Powney & seconded by Jean Belt. The rest of the committee were elected as follows:- Robin Holley (Treasurer) p Claire Skinner s Dennis Powney; Mike Marshman (Newsletter Editor) p Robin Holley s Claire Skinner; Julie Davis (Web Editor) p Helen Taylor s Mary Ross-Gower; Helen Taylor (Secretary) p Claire Skinner s Mary Ross-Gower; Mary Ross-Gower p Claire Skinner s Dennis Powney. Both Gillian Sheldrick & Virginia Bainbridge have formally stepped down after many years' service to the Forum as members &

committee members. The Chairman wished to record our thanks for all their hard work.

**AOB.** Janet Flanagan asked if we could promote each Conference earlier, especially in the Swindon area. The Chairman assured her that we do our best, but sometimes we rely on other people passing the information on.

Dennis Powney proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for all their efforts during the year.