

# **THE MARLOW SOCIETY**

Registered Charity 262803

## **Minutes of 57th Annual General Meeting**

### **Present**

Sir Keith Stuart (President), Mr Martin Blunkell (Chairman), Mr Mike Cottrell (Hon. Treasurer), Carole Holme (Hon. Membership Secretary), Mr George Lawrence (Hon. Secretary) and around twenty-five other Members of the Society met in the Garden Room at Liston Hall at 8:00pm on Thursday 11th May 2017.

### **1 - Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Martin Blunkell welcomed Members to the 57th AGM. After the official business, the assembled Members would be addressed by Robin Atkinson on the subject of the structure of the Town's bridge.

The Chairman gave tributes to Members recently deceased. Harriet Wilson had been a strong servant of the Society and her untimely death was a great shock. Tony Reeve had been a fountain of local knowledge and a Trustee of the Society. Derek Done had given generously to the Society of his professional planning experience and both he and Margaret had served the Town as mayors.

The President of the Society Sir Keith Stuart was invited to take the Chair for the AGM.

### **2 - Apologies**

Apologies had been received by Hon Secretary from: Andrew Alchin, Lyn Cottrell, Peter and Jo Diplock, Gordon Hopewell, Deirdre Philpott, Bob and Jane Savidge, Su Wood.

### **3 - Minutes of 56th AGM**

The minutes had been posted in the room and placed on the website before the meeting. No changes were suggested from the floor. The motion that the minutes be adopted as a correct record was proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously.

### **4 - Matters arising**

The Executive Committee had notified no outstanding matters to raise and none were raised from the floor.

## **5 - Chairman's Report**

The Chairman's Report had been included in the 2016/17 Annual Review Newsletter, which had been delivered to every Member three weeks before the meeting.

The motion to adopt the Report was proposed by Mike Overall and seconded by Enid Briggs. The report was unanimously adopted.

## **6 - Annual Statement of Accounts**

Hon Treasurer, Michael Cottrell, reported on the Society's Annual Accounts. Copies of the report detail had been distributed to Members as they arrived.

The Hon Treasurer noted that as the Society's gross income is less than £25,000 the Charities Act does not require an Independent Examination. However, as in previous years, Executive Committee had chosen to undertake the voluntary review. After Executive Committee approval, the Chairman and Hon Treasurer had signed-off the Accounts on 11th May 2017.

Activities income was down mainly due to the reduced number of Local History Group talks, and the associated reduction in sales of the Society's publications. The new garden party is expensed under Activities.

Purchase of equipment shows the payment of £280 for the new Epson HD digital projector, replacing the Sony machine purchased in 2008.

The results show income exceeding payments by £199 (negative £572 in 2015) on total receipts of £3,939 in 2016. Subscription income increased to £3,111 (£3,067 in 2015).

The Society's finances are sound and at 31st December the Society had reserves of £15,003. This would give access to legal advice in furtherance of the Society's objectives, should the need arise.

On behalf of the Society, Hon Treasurer would be writing to Elizabeth Horton to express our thanks for carrying out the examination. Michael is delighted that Elizabeth has indicated her firm, Seymour Taylor, is willing to act as examiners for the financial year 2017.

Hon Treasurer made a personal statement outlining that with great regret he would be stepping down in the next three or four months because he and Lyn would be leaving Marlow after thirty-six years to be nearer to their daughter in Haddenham. Michael had enjoyed his eight years in post and would certainly miss everyone.

Alex Collingwood proposed and Tony Fawcett seconded that the Annual Accounts be accepted. This was agreed unanimously.

## **7 - Election of Officers of the Society**

The President advised that the three Officers of the Society had offered themselves for re-election:

|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Martin BLUNKELL  | Chairman           |
| George LAWRENCE  | Honorary Secretary |
| Michael COTTRELL | Honorary Treasurer |

No other nominations having been received, Alex Collingwood proposed and Mike Pankhurst seconded the re-election of the Officers. The meeting confirmed these appointments.

The President noted that there had been no nominations for the role of Vice Chairman and that the role therefore remained vacant.

## **8 – Election of an Executive Committee**

The following six members of the Society have been nominated and have indicated their willingness to serve on Executive Committee and so join unopposed for the next year:

Helen BELASCO  
Carole HOLME  
Ray ISTED  
Mike OVERALL  
Keith RAY  
Geoff WOOD

A motion to confirm these appointments was proposed, seconded, and carried unanimously.

## **9 – Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Messrs Seymour Taylor of High Wycombe are willing to continue as Independent Examiners of the Society's accounts.

George Lawrence proposed and Louise Blunkell seconded that Seymour Taylor be invited to examine the 2017 accounts. The motion was agreed unanimously.

## **10 - Receive and adopt changes to the Society's Constitution**

The President invited Hon Secretary to walk through the four proposed changes to the articles of the constitution that had been published in Newsletter.

Art.4: Subscriptions shall be payable on the renewal day shown on the application form signed by the Member. This change gives the option to collect subscriptions on the anniversary of joining, which would simplify the standing order mandate. Existing memberships would be unaffected. A change to the application form to implement rolling renewal would be a matter for the Membership Secretary and Hon Treasurer to decide.

Art. 5: An Annual General Meeting shall be held in or about May of each year to receive the Executive Committee's report and audited accounts and to elect Officers and Members of the Executive Committee and appoint an Honorary Auditor. Newsletter is now published three times a year. The cycle is pinned to the distribution of the Christmas edition. At four-monthly publication interval, and allowing for the required three week notice, AGM will fall in May.

Art. 6 & 8: Nominations for election of Officers / to the Executive Committee shall be made in writing to the Honorary Secretary, using post or email to the address published in Newsletter, at least 14 days before the Annual General Meeting. This change allows use of either paper or email notification.

The motion to adopt the changes was proposed by Alex Collingwood and seconded by Geoff Wood. Put to the vote the motion was carried unanimously.

### **Address by the President**

The President reflected on the state of the Society. Membership continues to grow and is encouragingly now around 800 members, twice the level of a similar society in the City of Chester. This strong membership position greatly adds to the influence we can have in discussions with the planning and other authorities.

Less comfortably, as a natural result of the growth of the Town, the workload on executive and the Society's helpers also grows. The President expressed the Society's gratitude to the Chairman and all the team, and supported Martin's plea for members willing to become involved to step forward.

The President thanked Mike Cottrell for managing the Society's accounting with tremendous conscientiousness for eight years. He remembered with pleasure the Society's garden party hosted by the Cottrell's at their home three years ago.

**Martin Blunkell**  
Chairman

**George Lawrence**  
Hon Secretary