



## Barnes Literary Society

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday March 18th 2009  
at 9.30pm at the OSO.

Present: Fiona Smith (Chairman), Helen Willan (Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary), Claire Boyling (Honorary Secretary), David Minch (Honorary Treasurer), Lucy Hine (committee member), William Mortimer (committee member) together with Isla Blair (patron) and 40 members of the Society.

### **Introduction by the Chairman**

Fiona Smith welcomed members and referred to the Agenda, Statement of Accounts and Minutes of the 2008 AGM which had been distributed to those present.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Julian Glover and Jan Pienkowski

### **Minutes of AGM held on March 12th 2008 and Matters Arising**

*Approval of minutes:* The minutes were approved unanimously as an accurate record (proposed by Charles Goldsmith and seconded by Jean Otty).

*Matters arising:* None.

### **Chairman's Report**

Fiona Smith took this opportunity to say that the Society continues to flourish and the variety of speakers and events has attracted a healthy membership. Topics have ranged through political journalism, publishing, script writing, the influence of the classics on Shakespeare and the friendship of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Visits were also arranged to the Globe Theatre and the Women's Library in Whitechapel. Our summer event with Cameo Opera was particularly popular with its programme of music with a literary content and excellent canapés by Diane du Parcq.

Fiona thanked our patrons for their support and encouragement and she is particularly grateful to Jan Pienkowski for producing our publicity brochure.

Membership was at its highest since the Society started 4 years ago and to ensure the comfort of members, it was capped at 320 in January. We promised to survey members about their satisfaction with the society to ensure that we keep in touch with their literary interests and this has since been done. Helen will tell us the results a little later.

The subscription was increased this year due to the running costs of hiring sound equipment and technical support and the increase in speakers' fees and room rental. Our website provides a good source of publicity and we appreciate the continued support of the Barnes Community Association's publication 'Prospect' and local libraries and shops for promoting our publicity. Barnes Book Shop has been a supporter since the BLS was founded and we appreciate Isla Dawes' regular donation of a book voucher and her attendance at events with our speakers' books.

Lastly, Fiona thanked the committee for their enthusiasm in ensuring that the BLS fulfils its stated objective – ‘to make literary talent available for the enjoyment of local people’.

### **Honorary Treasurer’s Report and notification of subscription rate increase**

David Minch, Treasurer, drew attention to the higher expenditure in 2007-08 but income also rose due to the subscription increase. There is a cash cushion of a little over £4,000 to face uncertainties of the new season, for example, membership numbers and speaker fees. The cost of staging an event is approximately £900. The Summer event and other paid events cover their own costs.

A member asked why interest earned is zero. David explained that the money is in a current account and no interest is paid. Savings accounts are an alternative for some of the funds but the rates are very low at present.

There were no further questions from the floor and the accounts were adopted (Steve Perry proposed and John Smith seconded).

### **Election of officers and committee**

All the officers and committee members had agreed to stand for a further year and those members present agreed to their being elected en bloc.

Nominations are as follows: Fiona Smith (Chairman), proposed by Pauline Ralph and seconded by Carolyn Rampton; Helen Willan (Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary), proposed by Dr Kalwant Sidhu and seconded by John Greenwood; Claire Boyling (Honorary Secretary), proposed by Chris Hine and seconded by Celia Rebuffa; David Minch (Honorary Treasurer), proposed by Audrey Miles and seconded by Julia Bebington; Lucy Hine (committee member with responsibility for publicity), proposed by Christabel Gairdner and seconded by Barbara Barnett and William Mortimer (committee member with responsibility for technical matters), proposed by Mike Spillane and seconded by Gill Spillane.

The above officers and committee members were duly elected on a show of hands.

### **Results of questionnaire**

Helen Willan reported that we received 50 responses from current members to our member questionnaire. Overall responses were favourable, commenting particularly on speakers, staging and welcoming. There were a few points for improvement such as uncomfortable seating and inadequate lighting. We will be taking action where possible. Sometimes the audience would like brighter lighting but the speaker might be less happy. The seating is not within our remit and at present the OSO does not have the funds to replace the chairs. There were also suggestions for topics and they have been noted.

The questionnaire to lapsed members had fewer responses. Non-renewal was mainly due to leaving the area, other commitments or no longer able to go out in the evenings.

### **Any other business**

One member commented that Fiona projects herself well but not all speakers do. Another commented that she thought the sound was fine. There is no loop system at the OSO.

A further member said that she thought it was remarkable that we had maintained such a high standard, that the events were brilliant and enhanced the life of Barnes.

Claire Boyling thanked everyone for staying on to attend and Fiona thanked our patron, Isla Blair, for joining us.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.