



Barnes Literary Society

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday March 12th 2008
at 9.15pm 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 31 members of the Society.

Introduction by the Chairman

Fiona Smith welcomed members and referred to the Agenda, Statement of Accounts and Minutes of the 2007 AGM which had been distributed to those present.

Apologies for Absence

None.

Minutes of AGM held on March 21st 2007 and Matters Arising

Matters arising: One member commented favourably on the improvement in the audio at meetings during this last season.

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

Chairman's Report

A full report for the year ended Sept 2007 is printed in the 2007 Report and Financial Statements. Fiona Smith took this opportunity to comment that the third season had been marked by its ability to attract high profile speakers, make improvements in acoustics and enhance publicity through the new website. Meeting topics included the contemporary novel, biography, poetry, writing for children, romantic fiction and military history. Notable speakers included Justin Cartwright and Claire Tomalin. Outings included an informal visit to the British Library and one to the National Archive. About 100 members and guests enjoyed our summer event with entertainment by a storyteller and an excellent supper provided by Diane du Parcq.

Fiona thanked our patrons for their continued support. Roger McGough gave members a highly entertaining evening centred on his newly published autobiography and Jan Pieńkowski once again produced our publicity brochure and some of the posters.

A priority was to improve the sound system and after investigating several options, it was decided to arrange a rental agreement. This has proved very satisfactory and Fiona thanked Alan Trehwitt of AT Sound. The new website has resulted in higher visibility for the society and improved communication for members. It has also provided archive material and a point of reference for potential new members and speakers.

These operational improvements, together with higher costs for room rental and speakers have raised expenses. Finances are, however, healthy and membership has stayed buoyant.

Future plans are to build on the Society's success in attracting high membership and providing a focus for high quality literary events.

Fiona finished by thanking the committee for their hard work and the members for their enthusiasm and support.

Honorary Treasurer's Report and notification of subscription rate increase

David Minch, Honorary Treasurer, reported that in the year 2006-7, income was 8% lower and expenditure 4% lower than in the previous year. The cash surplus had declined but the Society was still in credit. The £2,000 earmarked for the purchase of sound equipment was not needed as we had decided to hire, not buy, the necessary equipment and the above amount has now been written back into the general reserve. The prospect for the 2007-8 season is that we can expect a small negative balance and in view of this we shall be increasing the subscription rate as from 1st October 2008. The new rates will be £25 for a single membership and £40 for a joint membership. This is the first subscription increase since the Society was founded four years ago. New standing order forms will be supplied to those members using that method of payment and they will also be available on the website. It will be essential for us to keep up our present level of membership if we are to continue to provide a full and varied programme.

There were no questions from the floor and the accounts were adopted (Nick Willan proposed and David King Farlow 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 Caroline Rampton and seconded by Maria Harvey; Helen Willan (Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary), proposed by Margaret Fruchter and seconded by Rosemary Swatman; Claire Boyling (Honorary Secretary), proposed by Jane Skerrett and seconded by Pauline Ralph; David Minch (Honorary Treasurer), proposed by Audrey Miles and seconded by Sue Boyd; Lucy Hine (committee member with responsibility for publicity), proposed by Candy Walker and seconded by Chris Hine and William Mortimer (committee member with responsibility for technical matters), proposed by David Heyhoe and seconded by Arthur Russell.

The above officers and committee members were duly elected unanimously (proposed by Charles Goldsmith and seconded by Cathy Sacré).

Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.32.