



Barnes Literary Society AGM 13 March 2013

Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Wednesday 13 March 2013 at The Methodist Church, Barnes Green.

Present: Fiona Smith Chairman, Helen Willan Vice-chairman, Clare Boyling Honorary Secretary, Patrick Harvey Honorary Treasurer, Lucy Hine, Sarah Kearney, David King-Farlow together with 44 Society members.

1. Introduction by Chairman

Fiona Smith formally welcomed members, thanked them for staying for the AGM and referred them to the Agenda, Minutes from last year's AGM and Annual Report for year ended Sept 2012, which had been distributed to those present.

2. Apologies for Absence

Jan Pieńkowski, Roger McGough, Emma King-Farlow.

3. Minutes of AGM held on 21 March 2012

The minutes were proposed by Charles Goldsmith and seconded by William Mortimer as an accurate record. The resolution was passed on a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Report

Fiona Smith, Chairman, included a report in the financial document which she hoped those present had, for the year ending Sept 2012. She summarised some key points and said a few words of thanks.

Looking back over the previous BLS year there have been many highlights with fresh literary topics and a wide range of speakers to stimulate and entertain. The programme featured an introductory talk on the future of theatre with Sam Walters, Director of the Orange Tree which linked in well with a 'behind the scenes' tour of Richmond Theatre later in the season.

Other topics were wide ranging and included current Middle Eastern affairs in Yemen, Biography and Philosophical Fiction. We were delighted to welcome Victoria Clark, Philip Ziegler and Bidisha to present these subjects. A engaging talk by Salley Vickers on 'The Spirit of Stories' was a popular introduction to the New Year and Bidisha's vibrant presentation on the novels of Iris Murdoch gave new insights into a favourite writer. A local visit to Kelmscott House in Hammersmith on a lovely spring day gave members an occasion for social interaction as well as interesting insights into the life and works of William Morris. In these days of constant change in the literary world BLS likes to keep up to date with current trends and in May a panel of experts was invited to discuss 'The Business Of Books- Now and Tomorrow'. Writer David Harsent, Carolyn Mays publishing director of Hodder and Stoughton and our local Barnes Bookshop bookseller Isla Dawes provided lively discussion on this topical issue. A fitting conclusion to the BLS season in the year of the Diamond Jubilee was a themed summer party - 'Diamond Days', A Victorian Jubilee Celebration - produced by Emma King-Farlow and Shadow Road Productions. The BLS committee even got into the swing of the occasion with fancy dress!

We were pleased to widen our horizons and to be invited to participate in the planning of The Richmond Arts Service publication 'Dear Barnes' and in The Richmond Literature Festival's events in Barnes. We are fortunate to have the continued support and encouragement of our BLS patrons Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Patrick Neate and Jan Pieńkowski. We are particularly grateful to Jan Pieńkowski who has designed our publicity brochure since we started. Our links with Barnes Book Shop are important to BLS and Isla Dawes' regular donation of a book voucher for members, and her and Dan's attendance at events with our speakers' books deserve our appreciation. The Chairman asked members to join her in thanking the Committee for all their hard work. Behind the scenes they put in a great deal of work in attracting speakers and organising events and outings. It is thanks to their commitment and hard work that BLS continues to thrive.

6. Honorary Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts

Patrick Harvey, Treasurer, went through the Report for the year ended September 30 2012 which members had in front of them. Page 3 of the Report, shows an Income and Expenditure Statement. Subscriptions form the bulk of our Income. On the Expenditure side, our six Regular events last year, including Room hire, printing stationery and publicity, and website overheads, cost approximately £6000, i.e. an average of £1,000 each. Expenditure on Special events can be set against Income from ticketed events. These include Outings during the year and the Summer Event, which made a small loss.

There was a 7% drop in income compared to the previous year, but this was offset by an 6% decrease in expenditure. The net result was a small surplus of income over expenditure of £713.

Turning over to Page 4 of the Report, shows the Society's Balance Sheet. Cash and deposit at the bank represent our assets, but include some subscriptions for 2012-3 received before Sept 30. So Net financial assets at the end of the year increased by c. £700 to £6785. The Society has always looked on these financial assets, a result of the prudence of my predecessor, as a year-end cushion to enable us to face the uncertainties of the number of renewals in October, and believes this allows us a margin for financial support of local literary ventures. That summarises our financial position which, on page 2 of the Report, has been approved by our independent accountant Lesley Pasricha.

Questions from the Floor

In answer to a question from member John Smith, the Treasurer said that the Society still banked at HSBC but now at the Putney branch. Member Margaret Barry asked about the cost of using the Old Sorting Office for events compared to the Methodist Church. The Treasurer explained that the Methodists charged £400 an evening, including use of their sound system. The OSO charged £170 for use of the hall but after adding the cost of a sound system the total charge for the OSO is higher. For the last 3 events the Society had used the Methodists but were given a discount. As we provided the sound system the cost was about that of an OSO event.

The Treasurer recommended that the members approve the Accounts as presented. The Accounts and Annual Report were adopted by a show of hands after being proposed by Nick Willan and seconded by Susan Gibson.

7. Amendments to Constitution

Steve Perry proposed and Celia Cleave seconded a resolution to amend the Constitution of Barnes Literary Society in the following manner –

- “(i) in paragraph 2 (Aim), by deleting the words “people in the local area” and substituting the words “its members”;
- (ii) in paragraph 3 (Objects), by deleting the words “to inform members of local

literary events and to offer them information on visits to places of literary interest” and substituting the words “to organise visits to places of literary interest wherever situated and to publicise and support literary events and other literary ventures in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames”;

(iii) in paragraph 9(i)(a), by deleting the word “three” and substituting the word “six” .”

The resolution was passed on a show of hands.

8. Election of Officers and Committee Members

Before the election of Officers and Committee the Chairman thanked Helen Willan who is retiring as Vice Chairman and has been with Barnes Literary Society from the beginning. She has added much with her innovative ideas, such as arranging for and interviewing Andy Miller, the author of ‘Snowdrops’. Also retiring is Lucy Hine who has dealt with publicity and BLS archives since 2004, producing imaginative posters and organizing their display all over Barnes. The success of last summer’s lovely party is due to her. A small presentation was made to Helen and Lucy and the Chairman asked members to join her in thanking the Committee for all their hard work. She also thanked Alan from AT Sound who ensures what she thinks members will agree is an excellent sound system and Sheila Hayward Smith, one of our members, who takes minutes at our meetings. Both were thanked with a round of applause.

The chairman also thanked Chris Hine who has taken photographs of our events for our archives from the beginning of the Society. She presented him with a bottle of wine and hopes he will continue to act as photographer.

The Chairman read the nominations for the coming year with the names of proposers and seconders, as follows –

POST	NAME	PROPOSER:	SECONDER
CHAIRMAN	Fiona Smith	Josephine MacDermot	David Minch
VICE-CHAIR	David King-Farlow	Christopher Hine	Nicholas Carr
HON SEC	Sheila Hayward Smith	William Mortimer	P S Heyhoe
HON TREASURER	Patrick Harvey	Margaret Minch	Nicholas Carr
CTTE MEMBER	Claire Boyling	Susan Benfield	Ruth Ingrams
CTTE MEMBER	Sarah Kearney	Heather Parkinson	Rodger Hayward-Smith
CTTE MEMBER	Caroline Kelsall	Sarah Kearney	Fiona Smith
CTTE MEMBER	Kathy Owles	Lucy Hine	Helen Willan

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

9. Any other business

The Chairman thanked the members for their support and enthusiasm and said how pleasing that so many of them came to the AGM, and declared the meeting closed.