



Barnes Literary Society

Barnes Literary Society AGM 22 April 2015

Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Wednesday 22 April 2015 at The Old Sorting Office, Barnes Green.

Present: Claire Boyling Chairman, David King-Farlow Vice-Chairman, Sheila Hayward Smith Honorary Secretary, Patrick Harvey Honorary Treasurer, Sarah Kearney, Caroline Kelsall, Kathy Owles, Jane Skerrett committee members, Fiona Smith, Patron together with 39 Society members

1. Introduction by Chairman

Claire Boyling 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 2014, which had been distributed to those present.

2. Apologies for Absence

Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Jan Pieńkowski.

3. Minutes of AGM held on 19 March 2014

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by **Fiona Smith** and seconded by **Fiona Dare** as an accurate record and the resolution to approve the minutes was passed on a show of hands.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's annual report

This is my first annual report as Chairman having succeeded Fiona Smith at the AGM in March 2014. Most of the year therefore was under Fiona's tutelage and just the remaining few months of the season under mine. At the AGM we celebrated Fiona's many contributions to the Society and presented her with flowers and a glass bowl to mark her standing down and to celebrate her accession as a new Patron of the society.

We opened the season in October 2013 with Gavin Esler who spoke about Leadership and Power with fascinating insights into the thoughts and actions of successful leaders. This was followed by Ruth Rendell, best known for her crime stories, talking on her long life in writing and then Peter Conradi, dramatist and author, taking us through the highlights of George VI's meeting with Franklin D Roosevelt in the run-up to World War II. In February Sarah Wallis and Svetlana Palmer introduced us to the diaries and poignant private letters of soldiers in two World Wars and in March our trio of Barnes Writers, Rhidian Brook, Bernard O'Keefe and Daisy Waugh opened our eyes to the trials and travails of writing and publishing novels. Sara Wheeler, in May, talked of a different sort of trial when she spoke on

her residence with Polar explorers and on her book on Pioneering Women. We also organised two literary outings: one to Benjamin Franklin's House and a second to Highgate Cemetery -both fascinating in their very different ways.

One highlight of the year was our 10th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at The Depot restaurant with 80 members present. The riverside venue was an important part of our theme for the evening: poetry connected to the river Thames. We were delighted to welcome our patrons, Isla Blair, Julian Glover and Roger McGough, to 'sing for their supper' as it were, by reading the poems and to have the support of Jan Pieńkowski who was busy sketching some of our guests. We are also very grateful to Jan for his continued support in designing our annual publicity brochure and the splendid poster for our Ruth Rendell evening.

Links with the local community are important to us. We took part in the BCA organised Societies Day in May and we again sponsored the prizes to the two Poets Laureate in the *artsRichmond* Young Writers' Festival. We are delighted that the Senior Laureate, Kathryn Cussons, recently won a prize in a prestigious national poetry competition. The support of Isla Dawes in Barnes Book Shop, her regular donation of a voucher for the raffle prize and her attendance at all events with the speakers' books, is greatly appreciated as is the coverage of our activities in the BCA's 'Prospect', 'Living In' magazine and other local publications. We also value the management of our website by Anne Cotgreave at Skinny Cat Design. Thanks too to the OSO who have hosted most of our evenings, to the Methodist Church for hosting our first two events and especial thanks to Alan Trewhitt at AT Sound for his consistent technical expertise and advice (*applause from members*).

We have enjoyed excellent attendance at events with an average audience of 130 and with our opening two events topping 190. No society such as ours would be successful if it were not for our committee who have worked imaginatively and enthusiastically during the year and, most importantly, our members who continue to support our events and encourage our efforts. To you all, my very grateful thanks.

6. Honorary Treasurer's Report & Statement of Accounts

Patrick Harvey, Honorary Treasurer, referred members to the financial report for the year ended September 30 2014, which they had in front of them.

If you turn to Page 4 of the Report for the year ended September 30 2014, you will find an Income and Expenditure Statement. Subscriptions form the bulk of our Income, and increased last year by £500 to just over £7000. On the Expenditure side, our six Regular Events last year, including OSO hire, hire of sound system and speakers fees, together with indirect costs of printing stationery and publicity, website, insurance and accounting, cost over £7200, i.e. an average of £1,200 each event. Last year we incurred two new categories of expense, chair hire now that chairs are no longer available from the Methodists and the OSO's proposed new seating is not likely to materialize, and the first year of the Bursary which we have granted to the Richmond young Writers Festival. The other significant items on the Income and Expenditure figures relate to expenditure on Special events which can be set against Income from ticketed events. These included Outings during the year and the 10 year Anniversary party last April.

So the net result was a deficit for the year of £1279.

If you now turn over to Page 5 of the Report, you will find the Society's Balance Sheet. There is a small typo. in the first column, the figure of 4,516 (Cash at bank – current account) should read "4,566". I was hoping the Independent Examiner would be here in person, but a text from him has approved this change. Cash and deposit at the bank represent our assets, but as this includes some subscriptions for 2014-5 received before the beginning of the new year in October, net financial assets at the end of the year have to be adjusted to £5065, a decrease over the previous year. The Society has always looked on these financial assets as a year-end cushion to enable us to face the uncertainties of the number of renewals in October. Last year you agreed that the Members' subscription be increased, effective this financial year, and, in the light of the year's deficit, we consider the subscription increase justified.

That summarises our financial report which has been signed by our independent examiner John Forbes. John was appointed this year and I am very grateful for his assistance with these Accounts. My recommendation as Treasurer is that you approve the Accounts as presented.

QUESTIONS

A member, Steven Mindel, asked whether Gift Aid is reclaimed on the Society's subscriptions. The Treasurer replied in the negative as the Society is not a charity. When asked why the Society does not become a charity the Treasurer replied that the Society was not suitable for charitable status, he was not qualified to go into the technicalities but the committee had discussed the issue over the years. The Chairman added that another option (Charitable Incorporated Association) had now become available which the committee would investigate.

7. Adoption of Annual Report and Accounts

The Treasurer recommended that the members approve the Accounts as presented, with the small amendment referred to. The Accounts and Annual Report of the year ended 30 September 2014 were adopted by a show of hands after being proposed by **William Mortimer** and seconded by **David Simpson**; members applauded the Treasurer.

8. Approval of rates of subscription

Members approved maintaining the rates of subscription by a show of hands.

9. Election of Officers and Committee Members

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

POST	NAME	PROPOSER	SECONDER
CHAIRMAN	Claire Boyling	Sarah Kearney	Peter Dixon
VICE-CHAIR	David King-Farlow	Paul Dare	M. W. Marjoram

HON SECRETARY	Jane Skerrett	Corynna Jeudwine	Julia Bebington
HON TREASURER	Patrick Harvey	Jill Simeoni	G.H. Kelsall
CTTE MEMBER	Sarah Kearney	K. Owles	J. Mallinson
CTTE MEMBER	Caroline Kelsall	J. Bebington	Corynna Jeudwine
CTTE MEMBER	Kathy Owles	Jill Simeoni	J. Mallinson

The above officers and committee members were duly elected en bloc on a show of hands, proposed by **Steve Perry** and seconded by **Steven Mindel**. Sheila Hayward Smith retired as Honorary Secretary and was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the committee.

10. Any other business

A member thanked the committee for the recent practice of sending an email to all members just before an event, giving details of the speaker and topic, which he found most useful. He asked if news of other literary events in Barnes could be so circulated but the Chairman explained that BLS received too many requests to publicise the events of other societies for it to be feasible.

Patron Fiona Smith thanked Claire for all her hard work in her year as Chairman, which members roundly applauded.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked the members for their support and enthusiasm, said how pleasing that so many of them came to the AGM and declared the meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.