

The Coventry Society.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in the Frank Whittle Building, Coventry University, on Monday 17th April 2023.

- 1. Attendance.** 35 members and visitors were in attendance at the meeting including 5 Committee members.

Apologies: T. Cornfoot, J. Goodman, S. James, P. Lockyer, N. Norman, J. Payne, H. Tether.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the events of the evening.

- 2. Minutes of the A.G.M. held on 11th April 2022.**

- a) Accuracy. The minutes were accepted as being accurate.
- b) Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
- c)

- 3. Chairman's Report.**

This was published on-line prior to the meeting and a full report may be read on the Society's website. The Chairman thanked the Secretary, John Payne and Committee member Paul Maddocks for their help in preparing the report. In his presentation the Chairman highlighted some aspects of the Society's activities.

These included:

- Campaigning on a variety of issues such as protection of green spaces, urging development of brownfield sites and commenting on large developments such as City Centre South
- Supporting the Council when it was believed that its schemes and policies will benefit the community. E.g. Giga Factory at Baginton, proposed policy on HiMO's and conservation areas.
- Responding to various Council consultations throughout the year, the work put into responding to these documents was a credit to the Committee.
- Partnerships and dialogue with other organisations in Coventry such as Coventry University, Heritage Coventry Trust, Sherbourne Valley Project and Cultural Project and in the wider community, support for Civic Voice.
- Proposing buildings for listing both local and national.
- Responsible for the installation of several Blue Plaques; e.g. on the Firs, former Coventry Preparatory School and Philip Larkin plaque on the house where he was born.
- Monitoring planning applications throughout the year and commenting where appropriate.
- Continued weekly meetings with a variety of speakers and visits to places of interest and importance [in the city and beyond].
- A second Heritage Conference bringing together different groups from across the city to explain and exchange information on what they are doing.
- Continuing to publish stories and articles on the Society website.

4. Treasurer's Report.

- a) The accounts for 2021/22 had not yet been audited due to the ongoing health issues of the former Treasurer. However, he has committed to ensuring they are audited as soon as possible. When this is done they will be presented to the membership at an appropriate meeting.
- b) Accounts 2022/23. Because the previous year's accounts have not been audited and a new Treasurer has been installed, it has not been possible to fully account for the previous financial year. However, as soon as the 2021/22 accounts are audited, the 2022/23 accounts will be completed and presented to the membership at an appropriate meeting. It can be reported, however, that the Society's finances are robust.

5. Appointment of Auditors.

In view of the above this issue was not considered.

6. Election of Officers.

- a) Vice-Chair: T. Cornfoot nominated by P. Walters and seconded by J. Payne. Agreed.
- b) Secretary: J. Payne nominated by P. Walters and seconded by T. Kenny. Agreed.
- c) Treasurer: J. Passmore nominated by P. Walters and seconded by T. Kenny. Agreed.

7. Election of Members of the Committee.

The following members were nominated: J. Goodman, A. Law, P. Maddocks, N. Norman, T. Brown. All nominated by P. Walters and seconded by J. Payne. Agreed.

8. Further nominations for the Executive Committee.

There were no proposals at the meeting.

9. Life membership.

The Committee had agreed to confer Life Membership on T. Kenny who was stepping down from the Committee. P. Walters spoke about T. Kenny's background and work on the committee and presented him with a framed certificate of Life Membership.

T. Kenny responded by thanking the Chairman and members of the Committee for the honour. He said that he thought this was an appropriate time to leave the Committee, he had enjoyed the interesting work and he hoped that he would be replaced by younger members.

10. A. o. B.

There was no further business.

The Chairman ended the Annual General Meeting with the information that the 2024 A.G.M. would take place in April next year.

George Wagstaffe, Artist.

Following the A.G.M., the guest speaker was George Wagstaffe, a local but nationally renowned artist and sculptor.

He talked about his early childhood in Coventry and how the bombing of Coventry and its renaissance has inspired his work. At 7 he moved to Birmingham and there was impressed by the work of the Pre-Raphaelites. He was drawing at 7 and painted his first large picture when he was 13. At 17 while at the Lanchester College in Coventry, he created the Naiad, perhaps his most famous local sculpture. He was later commissioned by Arthur Ling to create the Phoenix, a sculpture that did not meet with universal approval but has become an enduring symbol in the city.

He spoke about some of the other sculptures he has created which can be found in many places in the country. The ones associated with Coventry can be found in the Cathedral, St Mary Magdalene Church and Bond's Hospital, the latter a very personal sculpture relating to his late wife. His current commission is the 'Tree of Life' for Coventry University which he hopes will be installed and unveiled later this year. Much of his work is inspired by the themes of resurgence and renewal.

Bringing his talk to a conclusion, he explained the processes by which his sculptures were realised from inception to final manufacture and installation.

He then answered questions from the audience.