

Wigan Local History and Heritage Society (WLHHS)

Minutes of meeting, held at Forbes on The Lane, on Monday 5th August 2019 **18 members present.**

Minutes of the last meeting, held at The Book Cycle, on 1st April 2019 were circulated for information.

Clare Kenyon offered to act as minuting Secretary for this meeting.

1. Elect a chairperson for this meeting only.

Proposed by The Secretary :

That Eric Curless should chair the meeting:

Agreed unanimously

2. Receive apologies.

Apologies received from Sheila Ramsdale.

3. Confirm that WLHHS should continue.

Proposed by the Chair:

That the group should continue:

Agreed unanimously

4. Pay tribute to our retiring Chairperson Sheila Ramsdale.

The Chair paid tribute to Sheila Ramsdale for her excellent, and long standing service in the role of Chairperson, and also as a founder of the group, in which she had been instrumental in setting up, along with her friend Anne (now deceased)

Proposed by Tom Walsh:

As a token of respect, for all the work, dedication and commitment given to the Society, over many years by Sheila, then she should in turn be awarded the title of, Honorary Life President:

Agreed unanimously.

Thanks was also given to other former retiring members, Margaret Settle for her service as Secretary, and Phyllis for her service as subscription secretary.

The Chair also thanked Tom Walsh, who kindly agreed to continue in the role of vice chair, and Audrey Welsh as treasurer, in the interim period up to the AGM in September.

5. Ascertain the current funds available and bank details.

The treasurer reported there is a current bank balance of £563.57, and it had been agreed that a time capsule should be provided by the Society, for burial under the WHAMM monument, during the opening ceremony, at a cost of £141.39

Proposed by treasurer:

To honour the commitment to fund the time capsule:

Agreed unanimously

It was confirmed that Tom, Audrey and Sheila are the current official signatories to sign off cheques etc.

Tom and Audrey agreed to continue the role, in the interim.

The Secretary enquired if there is a written constitution.

Action Point 1 for Secretary to: Ask Sheila Ramsdale for a copy of the Constitution and then to circulate this to all members before the AGM

6. Consider when to elect new officials: at this meeting or wait until AGM September.

A discussion took place around the question: 'is there a need for a committee', it was agreed to take this forward as an agenda item at AGM. Meanwhile members were asked to consider any role they may be interested in.

Action point 2 for Secretary to: circulate to members, an outline of different role descriptions, before the AGM

7. Consider alternative venues for future meetings.

Whilst it was agreed that the Book Cycle is a good venue for meetings, it was also agreed that it does not easily lend itself to digital presentations, as the natural light from high windows detracts from the screen, making it difficult to see it clearly.

A discussion took place around the suitability, and availability of other possible venues.

Action point 3 for Peter Fleetwood to: enquire ASAP about availability of a room at Wigan Cricket Club in time for the AGM

If room not available at The Cricket Club, then Eric Curless will enquire about the availability of the Book Store as an alternative venue for the AGM

8. Fix the date of AGM September.

Because of Sheila Ramsdale's ongoing commitments in her new role as an elected Councillor for Wigan Council, she is often unavailable on Monday evenings, and has requested that the day of the meetings be changed to Tuesday if this is convenient to the other members.

Proposed by the Chair:

To change the date of future meetings to the first Tuesday in the month, instead of Monday:

Agreed unanimously

The date of the AGM will be Tuesday 3rd September 2019

9. Consider a topic and speaker for a short presentation at AGM September meeting.

A discussion took place, and Paul Kenyon offered to organise a speaker to give a short presentation on the History of Wigan Hospitals.

Peter Fleetwood briefly outlined some of his current research into the Gidlow Sisters, who also have links to Wigan Infirmary.

Update 7th August 2019: Paul's work commitments have since changed and it is now looking unlikely that he will still be available to organise this, so an alternative will need to be arranged. Any suggestions, please contact the Secretary ASAP

10. Receive suggestions for speakers at future meetings.

Members were asked to discuss how they would like to see the group develop, and the general consensus is:

Most members would like the opportunity for the group to be more research led, whereby they can carry out research on topics based around their own personal interests, and then present their findings to the rest of the group.

Obviously, not everyone will want to use this approach, and there will be no pressure on them to do so. It will be equally fine for any member to just come along and listen to others, as they so choose.

Some other possible techniques to use, were put forward: using a theme based approach: 'Aspects of Wigan' whereby specialist speakers could be invited to complement the members research which has been carried out within those themes.

Another 'fun' suggestion was, 'ten items in ten minutes' whereby a specific meeting could be given over to members bringing along an interesting artefact and talking about it.

Peter Fleetwood outlined some possible future projects for the group around buildings of local interest, such as the endangered Plantation Gates and Lodges on Wigan Lane, and the re-siting in the town, of the Moot Hall Common Seal, which is currently hidden away in the Museum Secure Store.

Proposed by Carl Middleton:

That before the AGM the Secretary to send out a questionnaire to all members to find out the particular interests of the group:

Agreed unanimously

11. Consider methods of promoting WLHHS in order to grow membership.

A long discussion took place about possible ways to promote more local community interest in the group, and the general consensus is, that we need to set up a digital and social media presence to get the message out there.

It was also suggested that a representative of the Family History Society should be invited to the next meeting with a possible view to amalgamating the two groups.

Peter Fleetwood, outlined an opportunity to use the Wigan World portal to link all the current Wigan history groups online, enabling more networking between the groups to take place.

This item will be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting.

Action point 4 for The Chair: To invite a representative from the Family History and Heritage Society to the next meeting.

12. Any other business.

A question was asked regarding the whereabouts of the group projector.

Ray Hinds has it in safe keeping. It was suggested that Ray bring it along to the next meeting so that it can be checked in advance of presentations for its compatibility to Apple products.