

Minutes of the 58th Annual General meeting of the Midhurst Society, held on Thursday 18th April 2019 at the South Downs Memorial Hall, North Street, Midhurst GU29 9DH commencing at 7pm.

<u>Committee present:</u> Michael Balmforth	Chair
Harvey Tordoff	Honorary Treasurer
Peter Shaw	Lecture Secretary
Claire Cox	Administrative Secretary
Sue Balmforth	Secretary

- (1) **Apologies for Absence:** Michael de Jong-Smith, Paul Ryan, June Reed, Mr. Mrs. Whytock, Tina and Gavin Litchfield, Sue Edwards, Sancha Elsdon, Peter Sydenham, Mr. Mrs Irvine, Mr. Mrs Hart, Stewart Graham, Ellen Weeker, Angela Campbell-Horne

This AGM was therefore attended by 41 members

- (2) **The Minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting 2018** were approved and signed as correct.
Proposer Fran Cooper Seconded Jean Farguson

- (3) **Matters Arising:** None

- (4) **Report from the Chair:** In addition to the printed Report which was distributed with the AGM papers, Michael Balmforth emphasised the need for more member participation at any level in light of the retirement of Claire Cox and by end of year Peter Shaw.

Michael highlighted the fact that we have welcomed 29 new members this year, and expect their involvement will be greatly beneficial to the very broad number of activities initiated in the last 12 months .

In January for the visit of CDC Councillors the meeting room was filled with members and visitors. This was our first experience of hosting a local public authority "Q&A" session - which we hope to exploit in future."

Other major initiatives include the relaunch of the Magazine (expected next month) and a Christmas Party -and our Summer garden Party courtesy of Sarah and Tony Bolton at Woolbeding Glebe.

- (5) **The Honorary Treasurer's Report** was presented by Harvey Tordoff.

Items of note:

- (1) Harvey presented a financial statement for the year to 31 December 2018. It showed a decrease in receipts accompanied by a decrease in payments with the result that we have an excess of income over expenditure of £204
- (1) He also raised the issue of Legacy Funds totalling £35,234. Following last year's AGM action to ascertain the original history, source and intention of this legacy, he stated that this was the legacy of Mrs. Carne of Easebourne, and this year we have invested for the benefit of both the people of Midhurst and the Society itself: locally-sited defibrillators (outside Tescos and at the Sports Pavillion), and importantly, a total re-design of the Society's website.
- (2) Subscriptions have been raised in respect of 2019, as agreed at the 56th AGM. It was explained that the major factor was due to the prohibitive cost of the Magazine. Following discussions with member and independent author/publisher Peter Sydenham, it was ascertained early this year (2019) that this Spring will see a significantly expanded and colour version but at a lower production cost. Because of this significant saving to the Magazine cost, it was decided to pass on these savings to members in the form of free entrance to Talks for rest of 2019.

- (6) **Adoption of Accounts.** The 2018 Accounts were adopted unanimously.
Proposer: Chris Wright Seconder: Andy Robertson

(7) Election of Officers

Chairman

Michael Balmforth

Proposer: Sheila Ryan
Seconded: Sue Whitehead

Elected unanimously

Honorary Secretary

Sue Balmforth

Proposer: Sue Whitehead
Seconded: Sheila Ryan

Elected unanimously

Honorary Treasurer

Harvey Tordoff

Proposer: Andy Robertson
Seconded: Brian Cox

Elected unanimously

(8) Election of Committee

The following Committee Members stood for re-election: Michael de Jong-Smith,
Peter Shaw

Proposer: Sheila Ryan
Seconded: Sue Whitehead

Elected unanimously en bloc

Claire Cox who is standing down this year after many years of faithful service was thanked by everyone present for her hard work, and on behalf of the membership Sue Balmforth presented Claire with an orchid.

On behalf of the members and Committee, Mike Balmforth was delighted to welcome new Committee member Pat Wallace

(9) Thanks were expressed to Mervyn Evans-Jones who was the Independent Examiner of the Society's accounts for 2018 and a gift of appreciation was proposed.

(10) Mike Balmforth also thanked Steve Diver our IT and AV operator who attends every Talk to handle speakers requirements.

(11) Mike Balmforth then read out a letter from our member and Guest Editor in Australia ,Peter Sydenham .

Question Time

Re the Legacy, suggestions included possible placement of more public benches -successful in previous years, re-evaluation of Young Persons essay competition also previously very successful.

Another more general suggestion by new member James Beaumont , was to engage with young people. Mike Balmforth informed the meeting that it is hoped that following meetings by Sue Balmforth with Midhurst Rother Academy, local students will comment on various local topics for use in our social media.

Before the interval, the Chairman invited members to try their luck in guessing the weight of the specially commissioned* Chocolate Easter Bunny on display, and Member Peter Dirham gave closest to 1.458 kilos and was presented with this unique chocolate trophy.

During the interval a 'You Tube' clip of Hugh Bonneville (whose agent had apologised on his behalf for not being available to read to us in person due to rehearsals for 'Shadowlands' at the Festival Theatre) reading a reprise on the South Downs accompanied by track of the music 'In a South Downs Way'.

Following the interval we enjoyed a presentation by new members and local artist David Johnston and his wife on his unique interpretations and portrayals of Sussex scenes and landmarks.