

THE MOSELEY SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 17th JUNE 2021, 7.30 p.m.
by means of an online meeting.

Helen Minovi welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that this was the 42nd annual meeting of The Society following the cancellation of most meetings during 2020 due to the pandemic. She reminded members of the meeting in 2019 when Geoff Rees had conducted the business of the AGM in a record 15 minutes, so that the rest of the evening could be given over to reminiscences of the first 40 years of the Society, and also enjoying the buffet prepared by Maison Mayci. She ended her introduction by expressing the hope that it would be possible to hold another sociable event before too long, to celebrate the ability to mix safely in person once more.

There were 28 members present. The AGM began at 7.35 pm.

1. APOLOGIES had been received from Eric Adams, Jean Gilkison, Trevor Hocking, Robert Orme, John Underwood, Paul Gaynor, David and Deborah Taylor, Jill and Terry Adams, Revd Duncan Strathie, Anthony Collins, David McGillivray, Jack Wilson, Rachel Hinks, Lawrence Moulin and John Newson.
2. MINUTES of the last AGM held on 16th May 2019 had been circulated by email, were taken as read and agreed by all present.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS.

The Annual Review containing reports of the different aspects of the Society's work had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Helen said that the four pages included an account of how the work of the Society had continued as far as possible during an extraordinary year. It showed how all the different strands had worked, remained sustainable and just kept going. She thanked everyone involved.

Fiona Adams said that she would like to add special thanks to two people at the meeting, Carole McKeown and Gill McGillivray, for all they had done to support the Planning and Licensing group.

Geoff Rees asked for special mention to be made of the contribution of Ray Tier. He already looks after the website and chairs the Moseley History Group, but to this he has added responsibility for managing online meetings that the Committee has used to keep functioning throughout. There were no questions about the reports.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT AND ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS.

Copies of the full report and accounts to 31 December 2020 had been circulated in advance by email and made available on the website.

Phil Williams presented the accounts on screen to show that while income had remained fairly steady, expenditure had reduced because of the pandemic. He also noted that in 2019 there had been some exceptional expenditure on materials and events to mark the 40th anniversary. There were no questions, and the report and accounts were adopted unanimously.

5. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES.

Helen Minovi confirmed that all the current Trustees were willing to continue to serve. They serve for terms of three years, can stand for re-election and retire by rotation according to the year that they became a Trustee. This year Fiona Adams, Robert Orme, Paul Lindley and John Dring were offering themselves for re-election. She made a proposal to re-elect all four and this was approved unanimously.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

6.1 Roger Woods asked about the number of empty commercial premises in the centre of Moseley and if anything could be done to bring in new businesses. Izzy Knowles said that the Moseley Regeneration Group (known as the Regen Group, co-ordinated by Moseley Community Development Trust (MCDT) and including many of the voluntary groups in Moseley) was actively considering this issue. She said that at their recent meeting information about empty properties had been shared, and that it is only about 7 properties where there appear to be no plans to reopen. Fiona Adams added that the Regen meeting had been told that, compared with other local centres, the economy in Moseley is relatively healthy. Cllr Kerry Jenkins added that following the Regen Group meeting, Lorna Brewster, CEO of MCDT, is in discussion with Chris Hurst, the High Street and Business Improvement District Manager for Birmingham City Council. She is hoping to apply for funds to support initiatives to find alternative uses, including temporary uses, for empty premises.

Roger Woods asked what was known about the reasons for businesses closing or moving to Kings Heath, and if high rent is a factor. Izzy Knowles agreed that high rent is a factor, but there are also some cases of issues with particular landlords. She knew that one business that recently relocated to Kings Heath had done so because of the difficult relationship with a landlord. She also said that she had heard that the proposal from Davenports to open a bar and small hotel at the former HSBC bank would now not go ahead. Fiona Adams added that some years ago Davenports had applied for their alcohol licence and had told the Licensing Committee that the business plan for the hotel would be supported by European funding because of the number of jobs it would create, so she assumed that without that source of funds the proposal would no longer be viable. Izzy Knowles added that after volunteers from Moseley Litterbusters had cleaned the graffiti from the empty Boots premises, the landlord had engaged with them and had allowed the shop windows to be used for temporary exhibitions by local artists. Lorna Brewster is now in discussion with the landlord of the former Pizza Express building, including about the graffiti on the sidewall. She added that voluntary action on graffiti seems to be a good way to engage landlords. There is now a WhatsApp group for Moseley Businesses but as yet no one has volunteered to co-ordinate it. Roger Woods asked about powers to require landlords to keep their property in good condition. John Dring said that there were powers under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act for a Local Planning Authority to serve a notice on a landowner if the condition of their property is harmful to the area. In reply to a question, Kirsten de Vos confirmed that on behalf of Moseley Litterbusters, she had enquired about this process in relation to fly-tipping on the car park at the corner of

Valentine Road and Ashfield Avenue. However the Planning Enforcement Officer had told her that she had a huge case list of work and so this is not likely to be an easy option to follow.

6.2 Mike Marlow said he would like to comment on the excellent report by the Planning and Licensing sub-group. He said that the under-mining of the Town and Country Planning Act by the current government is very depressing, and he encouraged the group to keep members informed about the effects they see, for example of the relaxation of Permitted Development Rights. He added that the changes to Use Classes and the impact on the 50% non-retail policy might have some benefits in allowing new businesses to open in the shopping centre. He also raised the issue of the draft St Agnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and whether or not the effect of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods elsewhere had affected the character of Oxford Road.

6.3 Fiona Adams said that she had been asked by Anthony Collins to raise the issue of the need for urgent repair of the Red Carriage Bridge in Cannon Hill Park. She added that Anthony has been told by Andy Foster that the bridge was built by John Barnsley rather than by his grandfather John Bowen. He is nevertheless supporting the efforts to have the bridge repaired. Roy Cockel said that in addition, the Society should also raise a query about the lack of repair of the Golden Lion Pub in the Park. Its repair had been promised as a Millennial project, but the structure continues to deteriorate. Kerry Jenkins later offered to investigate both issues.

There were no further questions and Helen Minovi thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.05 p.m.