

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE SANDWICH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
HELD AT THE JURY ROOM, SANDWICH GUILDHALL
7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 12 JANUARY 2023

PRESENT: John Hennessy (Chairman), Cllr Paul Carter (Vice Chairman and Hon. Secretary), Chris Hagerty (Hon. Treasurer), Mike Vaile (Lecture Secretary), Mike Elmes (Tours Secretary), existing committee members and 42 society members and guests.

1. **Welcome by the President:** John Hennessy asked Paul Carter to say a few words on behalf of the Mayor who had given his apologies. PC welcomed everyone to the 2023 AGM stating how proud he was that Sandwich Local History Society (SLHS) was still going so strongly when other organisations and societies have fallen by the wayside, including the sad closure of Wingham History Society last year after many years of existence. PC thanked John Hennessy (JH) and the committee for keeping the History Society going in difficult times and said there were three strong foundations to SLHS The great historic town we have, the great people who support us and the strongest committee he had seen in his 12 years on the committee.
2. **Apologies:** Cllr Jeff Franklin, Marion Gurr, Marina Jordan, .
3. **Minutes from the previous AGM on 13 January 2022:** Copies had been previously circulated by the Chairman and were accepted as being a correct and true record.
4. **Minutes Arising:** The Chairman asked if there were any matters arising, but none were raised at the meeting.
5. **Chairman's report:** (Please see the attachment to these minutes for John Hennessy's report)
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Chris Hagerty (CH) came to the front of the meeting room to present his report. He said they were laid out as they were in the printed sheets that had been handed out. He asked if anyone had any questions but none were raised from the floor. PC asked that a vote was held on the acceptance of the accounts and it was proposed by Danielle Carter and seconded by Jean Henderson, voted unanimously by those present to agree and accept the accounts as shown.
7. **Lecture Secretary's Report:** Mike Vaile (MV) thanked JH and said that we have had four excellent lectures, including the AGM, to date and four more yet to come, on the 9th February, Dr Dinah Winch will speak on the Huguenots in East Kent during the 17th century then on the 9th March, Sarah Nathaniel will give a lecture on the Commonwealth grave.. MV explained about his experiences visiting the commonwealth war graves which were poignant to most of us. MV explained how the past two years had been about coping with the Covid difficulties and wanted to thank Imogen Corrigan and Roger Loukes for managing the society's Zoom lectures during this period. It was noted that some members aren't able to attend physical lectures but that recordings of our lectures are available if requested. MV said that he had learnt to be Lecture Secretary from Tom Richardson, who was present, who had done the job for ten years. MV was glad that we had a great successor in Dr Chris Day who had volunteered to help take over this role. MV said his last request was to give a vote of thanks to our Chairman, John Hennessy who had done so much. Chris Day (CD) then took over and it was a very invidious task to take on and that and

would make sure we had no disruptions. The last two lectures would be Roger Brookhouse on the cult of the pilgrimages and relics on the back of the Becket legacy so a great lecture. The final lecture is a Keith Parfitt, who is a well-known legend in heritage and archaeology with the Canterbury and East Kent Trusts and the Carmelite friary of Sandwich which was a major institution in this medieval town. CD finished by saying that next year's lectures are now in preparation.

8. **Tour Secretary's Report:** Mike Elmes stood to present to the meeting and said it had been a very busy year with 55 tours done already which is better than the previous year and over 390 visitors attending. The peak times are of course the summer and autumn whereas the winter there are less attendees. Unfortunately there had been the inevitable rise in the tour fee from the £2 to now a £5 fee, this had been researched and is still less than most towns are charging. Eight out of the thirteen guides have been active coping with the ongoing demand which has been more than adequate. The highlight of last year had been meeting and talking with Mrs Ella Lear who was 98 years old and had attended Sandwich during the war being billeted here in the Kings lodgings during 1941/42. We have also shown around 59 children from schools in the town and some other larger groups as well.
9. **Election of Officers:** The Deputy Mayor (PC) took the Chair for his third job of the evening and asked for proposals for the election of the Society's Chairman. John Hennessy was proposed again as Chairman by Mike Vaile and seconded by Mrs Hagerty. JH then took the Chair again and asked for proposals for Vice Chairman, Paul Carter was proposed by Callie Vaile and seconded by Dawn Baxter-Phillips. Hon. Treasurer, Chris Hegarty was proposed by Paul Carter and seconded by Roger Loukes. Nominations for Lecture Secretary, Chris Day was proposed by Dawn Baxter-Phillips and seconded by Janet Yapp. Tours Secretary had Mike Elmes proposed by Mrs Hagerty and seconded by Janet Yapp. The Chairman asked for nominations for the Secretary's role to give Paul Carter a break but there were no candidates proposed so it was accepted that Paul Carter continue in this role as Permanent Hon. Secretary proposed by Susan Hennessy and seconded by Mike Vaile.
10. **Any Other Business:** No items were raised from the floor.
11. **Lecture:** The Chairman stood to thank everyone for attending and that there would be refreshments after the lecture. It was noted that the Town Sergeant was off on sick leave so JH wished him a speedy recovery. Then Local historian and Lecture Secretary Dr Chris Day firstly said he was not going to change things dramatically but was hoping to tap into the wealth of the Members historic knowledge by allowing them to give cameo lectures in the forthcoming year on a subject of their choice. He then gave a very interesting and informative lecture on the history and background of his own career in the public health profession and how it had affected Sandwich with the issues of unclean water supply causing Typhoid outbreaks and the death of the Mayor before a water pumping station was installed at Woodnesborough to supply the town with clean water. His contribution was acknowledged with thanks by the Chairman and members.
12. **Refreshments:** The Chairman thanked the committee for supporting him for another year and for everyone attending and said that fine food and drink, prepared and served by the ladies of the committee members were offered and thoroughly enjoyed by all present.
13. **The Next Meeting:** The meeting was closed by the Chairman stating the next AGM would be the second Thursday of January 2024

Attachment 1: Chairman's Report.
Sandwich Local History Society AGM 12th January 2023

I would like to begin by saying Thank You to all of you involved in the running of our Society

Dear Friends firstly I would like to welcome you all on behalf of the Society to our AGM. As you are aware during 2022 it became obvious that we would not be able to continue our subscription at the rate which had prevailed for many years. Increases in the hire charges for The Grand Jury Room and in the costs of hiring lecturers have combined to make a severe dent in our income. Additionally the Covid pandemic has resulted in a downturn in visitors to our town and a resultant loss of income from Tour revenue which has hitherto been used to subsidise membership costs. It would have been financially foolhardy to allow the situation to continue unchecked and so the Committee decided to increase annual subscriptions to £10.00 per person with effect from September 2022. In addition we have also had to increase Tour charges to £5.00 per person and the minimum party charge to £15.00. In both cases our fees and charges still compare very favourably with others and I thank you all for your continued support.

2022 has, once again, proved challenging as the fallout from the Covid situation has affected the delivery of Lectures. We are again indebted to Roger Loukes and to Mike Vaile for the delivery of our Lecture programme initially through Zoom and latterly in the provision of recordings for those Members unable to attend in person. Whilst the Zoom facility has now been ceased due to falling demand and the costs involved the recordings are currently continuing.

As many of you know we are particularly keen to provide a knowledge of the history of Sandwich to our young people. We are fortunate in that the Junior School really value this opportunity and consider our free History tour to be one of the highlights of the Autumn term.

Our Guides also enjoy this morning and the students never cease to be interested and to ask thoughtful and relevant questions.

In addition, just before Christmas, we have launched a new Town Tour leaflet in partnership with The Arts Society specifically aimed at children as there was no previous provision for them. The leaflet is already proving to be very popular and will be distributed via the Visitor Information Centre and the Museum.

Hopefully this entry level Guide will encourage parents and family to book further Tours with our Guides and contribute to our income.

I would like to give a specific mention and a heartfelt 'thank you' tonight to Dr. Mike Vaile who has arranged our Lecture programme for the past few years and will now be stepping down after a very successful tenure handing over the reins to Dr. Chris Day. They have been working closely together to ensure a seamless progression.

We still have the second half of our Lecture season to look forward to and a mix of general subjects regarding the Huguenots in East Kent and the work of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

More specifically as far as Sandwich is concerned we have The Cult of Pilgrimages and Relics including the part Sandwich played especially in Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Thomas Becket when one of our landmark properties was a stopping point.

Finally there will be a lecture revisiting The Carmelite Friary of Sandwich which as many of you will be aware lies beneath the Whitefriars development in the centre of town.

We have just learned that the long awaited refurbishment of the Information Boards in the town will finally be going ahead. During my time with the Society work concerning these has been completed on three occasions but has always failed to come to fruition once Dover took over. This time, however, we do not have to rely on the effort (or lack of it) on the part of a DDC officer as the excellent news is that the Project will be seen through by Jon Iveson and by Keith Parfitt. Both of these gentlemen are well known to this Society as Lecturers with an unparalleled knowledge of our history and have the best interests of Sandwich at heart.

Finally I would like to thank the Members of the Society's Committee for all their help throughout the year in making SLHS such a success and to thank you for your continued support and encouragement.

**THE SANDWICH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Year 1 October 2021 to 30/09/2022
As at 30/09/2022

INCOME		2022	2021
Subscriptions		£624	£410.00
Publications		£98.25	£102.89
Guided Tours		£1,346.00	£1,171.60
Donations (Sandwich Festival etc)		£172.50	£214.39
Interest		£0.00	£1.07
	Total	£2,240.75	£1,899.95
 EXPENDITURE			
Hall Hire		£318.75	£0.00
Printing publications		£0.00	£0.00
Printing programmes		£250.00	£200.00
Insurance		£75.00	£75.00
Subscriptions		£40.00	£0.00
Speakers' Fees		£470.00	£335.00
Officers' expenses		£235.53	£112.18
School prizes		£25.00	£0.00
AGM expenses		£53.10	£0.00
Donations		£0.00	£0.00
New Publications		£0.00	£0.00
	Total	£1,467.38	£722.18
Excess income/expenditure		£773.37	£1,177.77
 Total Assets			
Represented by	Cash float	£20.00	£20.00
	Bank Current account	£15,259.43	£3,430.68
	Deposit account	£0.00	£11,043.29
	Total	£15,279.43	£14,493.97

Notes to accounts

Stock of books (written off financially) exists and will contribute to income in subsequent years.
Sound amplifier, 35mm projector, computer projector written off financially, but, still in good working order.