

The Society of Friends of Silton

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of The Society of Friends of Silton, held virtually on the Zoom application on Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 6:00 pm

PRESENT

Mr C Peel
Mrs L Woodhouse
Mr M Hall
Mr P Williams
Mr M Metcalf
Mrs M Anderson
Mr D Masters
Mrs A Bridge
Mr D Desborough
Mrs S Matthews

Col C Woodhouse
Mrs J Dyer
Mrs S Williams
Mrs M Metcalf
Mrs E Marriott
Mrs D Masters
Mr K Harris
Mrs A Browell
Mrs G Barter

1. Apologies for absence

Mrs S Menzies
Mr B Paul

Mrs S Paul
Mr R Dyer

2. Special General Meeting

The Secretary explained that the committee proposed to amend Rule 5 of the Society of Friends of Silton by increasing the size of the committee from five to six members. She then asked David Masters, one of the three Trustees of the Society to explain the background to this proposal.

David Masters told the meeting that when the Society was formed, he and another Church put together a set of rules which were passed at the first meeting of members.

Rule 3 provides that the officers of the Society shall be the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer and that each shall hold office until retirement or removal by a resolution passed at the AGM. The Trustees of the Society by Rule 4 shall be the Secretary, the Treasurer and one of the two Churchwardens of St Nicholas Church or a former Churchwarden nominated by the Church PCC.

Rule 5 provides that the management of the Society shall be by a committee comprising five members, namely the three officers and two further elected members. April Browell and Keith Harris are those two elected members.

Each committee member shall retire after serving for three years or may do so at any time but crucially is still eligible for re-election. The effect of Rule 3 and Rule 5 together is why, as the agenda shows, we elect the three officers and the two other members at the AGM and whilst it does seem that it may be unnecessary to re-elect within the three years, it does no harm to confirm the position.

However, Rule 5 goes on to provide that the Chairman of the AGM and for the ensuing year, shall be appointed at each AGM. That rule also adds that any vacancy in the Committee shall be filled by election at the AGM but the Committee may co-opt a member to fill the vacancy in the meantime until the AGM. Just to finish, membership of the Society is open to all who are interested in furthering the objects of the Society, namely to preserve, repair and maintain the fabric, fixtures and fittings of the Church, and the churchyard surroundings and also what is now the Village Hall but which used to be the Church Hall. The rules also provide for the raising of funds and their expenditure in accordance with those objects.

The Secretary asked for a Proposer and Seconder for the rule change. Proposed by Mr D Masters, seconded by Mrs S Matthews and carried unanimously.

3. Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 7th July 2020, were read, approved and signed as a true record of the proceedings. Proposed by Col C Woodhouse, seconded by Mrs A Browell and carried unanimously.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered by this meeting.

5. Election of Chairman

Mrs Rita Showering has recently resigned from the role of Chairman and the Secretary thanked her for her many years of service and explained how much she had enjoyed working with her. Mr C Peel has offered to stand for the position. The Secretary asked for any other nominations but Mr Peel was unopposed. Proposed by Mr D Maters, seconded by Mrs A Browell. Unanimous agreement.

6. Election of Secretary

Mrs Jackie Dyer kindly agreed to continue as Secretary if elected. She was unopposed. Proposed by Mr C Peel, seconded by Mrs D Masters. Unanimous agreement.

7. Election of Treasurer

Col Chris Woodhouse resigned as Treasurer during the year and the Secretary thanked him for his long service and all that he had put into the role and to the Society as a whole. The Secretary explained that Mr M Hall had offered to carry out the role and she asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Proposed by Mrs A Bridge, seconded by Mrs P Williams. Unanimous agreement.

8. Election of Members of Committee

The Secretary explained that Mr J Houchin had resigned as a member of the committee, having moved away from the area. She thanked him for his service, particularly all the hard work he put into running several Plant Sales for the Society. Mrs April Browell and Mr Keith Harris agreed to continue as Committee members and were unopposed. Proposed by Col C Woodhouse and seconded by Mrs S Matthews. Unanimous agreement.

Following on from the agreed change to Rule 5 of the Society, there is now a vacancy for a third committee member and Colonel C Woodhouse had offered to stand. The Secretary asked for any other nominations but Col Woodhouse was unopposed. Proposed by Mr D Masters and seconded by Mrs S Matthews. Unanimous agreement.

9. General Report and Accounts to 31st May 2021

The Treasurer, Mr M Hall, submitted the report, and highlighted various items under income and expenditure. The following points were explained:

The accounts have been audited by Peter Williams and have been found to be correct as at 31st May 2021. Copies were emailed to you together with your agenda and the minutes of the last AGM.

In addition to the cash held in the bank some £10,504 is invested in a Virgin Charity Account and a further £38,718 with the Charities Aid Foundation. These investments have served us well in the last year particularly the Charities Aid Foundation although recent fluctuations in the stock market and the negligible interest rates have reduced some yields.

Virgin Account. Interest rates for this account were a paltry 0.15% in the last financial year and are reducing to 0.1% from 28th July 2021. As mentioned at the last meeting your committee has decided to run down this account and use the money here to pay for any major bills. Because of the poor interest

rates, interest paid in the last twelve months was just short of a measly £20 on an investment of circa £10,000.

Charities Aid Foundation. The object of the Charities Aid Foundation is to provide an average annual real return of 5% over a business cycle. Investments are held in UK equities, overseas equities, property, bonds and cash. To date we have not had to withdraw any funds from this account and our original £15,000 investment is now worth £38,718.21, an increase of over £6,000 in the last twelve months. This was the figure quoted to me on 31st May, the end of our financial year. The Treasurer explained that he was really pleased that this account continues to perform well for the Society. It has returned a yield of about 18% over the last twelve months.

As you can see from the accounts, last year we had an excess of income of £3,558 but this year our account is £2,279 in credit. The difference is largely due to the bill for the works to the new car park and path at the Church, amounting to £1,550, combined with the restrictions the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our ability to hold events. That said, the Treasurer stated that he was pleased that the Society managed to continue the quiz and wine tasting events via Zoom. These proved popular with six events being held during the year, raising a wonderful £935 for the Society. The Treasurer thanked Col C Woodhouse and The Secretary for hosting the events and to all those members who took part.

We have made two grants to the Church in this Financial Year. These amounted to £1,550 - £350 for the car park tarmac and £1,200 for the new path and gate from the car park to the Church. Despite not making any grants the year to the Village Hall, we are aware of plans to improve the entrance and await finalization of the details. Apart from the rebuild of the Church wall (SE corner) which has been budgeted for, we are not envisaging any further major works on the Church this coming financial year. The only request has been for the SOFOS committee to consider how best to mark an estimated fifty unmarked graves which lie to the east of the Church. A suitable solution that will be long-lasting and cost-effective is required.

At the bottom of the accounts is a profit and loss comparison which shows what each event actually made after expenses were deducted.

In general, the fund is in good shape but we are aware of pending bills from both the Church and the Village Hall and doubtless there will be others also.

The Treasurer thanked Col C Woodhouse for his patience in talking through the handover of the Treasurer role and to Mr P Williams for the auditing of the accounts.

10. Annual Report by the Chairman (actioned by the Secretary)

You have heard from the Treasurer about the state of the Society's finances and overall, therefore, I believe your Society is in a healthy and I do not propose to carry out any specific fundraising measures over and above what we normally do although this last year has been different of course and we hope to be able to gather people together again for fundraising activities in the coming year.

This year we have made two grants to the Church as the Treasurer explained and the Village Hall still has £2,000 on account to improve the entrance hall and we will look favourably on any other requests from either the PCC or the Village Hall Committee.

Our social programme has been much reduced this year because of the pandemic and, whilst we have had good attendance at the Zoom quizzes, virtual meetings such as those do not appeal to everyone and so we look forward to returning to face-to-face events at some point soon. I would like to echo the Treasurer's thanks to Col C Woodhouse for putting all the quiz nights together.

Revenue raised this year therefore is markedly down as it was last year. The quiz nights raised an amazing £935 based on voluntary donations and I would like to thank those members who contributed to this fantastic sum.

Thanks to the Treasurer we were able to reclaim Gift Aid of some £718 from the Chancellor.

Your committee, the organisers of each event and I would like to thank everyone who gave their support, attended or helped in any way to make these events such a success. We hope we can continue to benefit from the unwavering help we receive from every member of the Friends so SOFOS can continue to be such a successful organisation. A sincere thank you.

11. Annual Report by the Secretary

The Secretary gave the following report to the meeting on the present membership position and proposed plans for raising funds over the next year:

Membership. There were 82 paid members at the end of last year and subscriptions are coming in daily following our membership renewal letter which was sent out in May. There are now some 40 members paying their subscription by standing order and this figure is increasing all the time. The Secretary asked members to use their best endeavours to recruit more members.

100 Club. Last year we had 86 members in the three draws we ran at the virtual quiz nights. Once again, we really need more members especially as a few members have moved from the area recently and have chosen not to renew their membership.

12. Future Events 2020 / 2021

We had already paid the deposit for the canal trip which we had to cancel last year and again this year but the organisers have agreed that we can carry that payment forward to next year for another trip in June 2022. The Secretary thanked Mrs A Browell for liaising with the canal boat company.

We are not yet in a position to give firm details of events we would like to plan in the future as these will depend on the easing of restrictions. However, we will be meeting as a committee, probably in September, to look forward and plan accordingly.

The Secretary asked that if any members have suggestions for future events that they let her know.

13. Any Other Business

On behalf of Peter Williams and the PCC, Anne Bridge thanked the committee for the financial support that is available. She particularly mentioned the new car park and footpath at the Church which has made a huge difference and for which the PCC are grateful for every Sunday. She expressed a hope that the Church wall will soon be repaired and mentioned that while there were a few things left of the Quinquennial Review they are small issues and there are no major works anticipated.

Sue Matthews asked to formally propose the accounts and this was seconded by Peter Williams. Unanimous agreement.

Keith Harris explained that work on the Village Hall was still ongoing and he thanked the committee for their help and contributions. It has been difficult to get both materials and tradesmen in the last year but he hoped that this would soon improve.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.45pm.

R. Showering
Chairman

J. Dyer
Secretary