



*These minutes are in draft form until approved at the 2012 AGM*

**Minutes of the Annual General meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011  
at 9.20 p.m. at the OSO.**

Present: Fiona Smith Chairman, Helen Willan Vice-chairman, Clare Boyling Honorary Secretary, David Minch Honorary Treasurer, Patrick Harvey, Lucy Hine, Sarah Kearney, together with Isla Blair and Julian Glover, Patrons and 27 Society members.

**Introduction by the Chairman**

Fiona Smith welcomed members and referred them to the Agenda, Statement of Accounts and Minutes of the 2010 AGM which had been distributed to those present.

**Apologies for Absence**

Roger McGough, Patrick Neate, Cathy and Peter Owles, Jean and Neville Otty

**Minutes of AGM held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

The minutes were proposed by Roger Jefferies and seconded by Fiona Dare as an accurate record. The resolution was passed on a show of hands.

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**Chairman's Report**

Fiona Smith referred to her report in the financial document. She summarized some key points for the year ending Sept 2010. Good speakers are key to the enjoyment of the programme and the aim each year is to invite speakers with expertise in a range of topics. We try to include both 'high profile' speakers and local writers and to introduce diverse literary themes.

All the speakers are in the annual report but just some of the varied topics covered included contemporary political issues, writing for stage and screen, mistresses in history, the lure of the faraway, writing about art and Charles Dickens. Members will no doubt recall these events with pleasure. When inviting speakers it is always good to use direct contacts and if any members have direct contacts which they think might be suitable, these ideas and suggestions are always welcome. They do need to be published writers or experts in a literary field and should be able to speak well in front of a large audience such as we regularly have.

BLS outings are always popular and last year included the National Gallery Library and The Charles Dickens Museum. The annual summer party was celebrated in style with local singer Carron Dawn Wright and her Band 'Showtime', a lively evening.

Membership has remained high and was capped in January with a considerable waiting list by the end of the season. Finances are healthy and the Society was able to maintain the current subscription for a further year.

Fiona explained that there is a great deal of hard work behind the scenes on the part of the committee who all have specific roles which they fulfill with great commitment to BLS. She asked members to show appreciation of their hard work. She gave a few other accolades, expressing gratitude for the support of the Barnes Community Association's monthly publication 'Prospect' which gives regular coverage of BLS activities, and the local library and shops for promoting BLS publicity. The Barnes Book Shop has been a loyal supporter of BLS since it was founded. BLS appreciates Isla Dawes' regular donation of a book voucher for members, and her attendance at events with speakers' books.

Fiona expressed appreciation of the BLS patrons, Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Patrick Neate and Jan Pieńkowski for continuing to give their support and encouragement and was pleased to welcome two of them to the evening. She expressed particular gratitude to Jan Pieńkowski who produces the BLS publicity brochure and some of the BLS posters including the banner behind her on the stage.

Finally she thanked the members for their support and enthusiasm; without them there would be no BLS.

### **Honorary Treasurer's Report 2010**

David Minch, Treasurer, drew attention to the accounts which members had in front of them; Page 3 of the Report for the year ended September 30 2010, shows an Income and Expenditure Statement. There was a 16% increase in expenditure compared to the previous year, but this was partly offset by an 11% increase in income. The net result was a small surplus of income over expenditure of £341, or just over 3%.

Page 4 of the Report, shows the Society's Balance Sheet. Net financial assets at the end of the year amounted to £5,216. These financial assets are a year-end cushion to enable BLS to face the uncertainties of the number of renewals in October and to plan accordingly. Once again membership numbers have to be capped because of seating limitations in the OSO hall.

Each of the Regular Events last year, including rent, publicity and overheads etc, cost an average of £1,200. The Summer Event and Outings during the year are ticketed and intended to be self-financing. The financial position remains in reasonable health. The Treasurer recommended that the Accounts as presented be approved and invited questions.

### **Questions from the floor**

A member, Roger Jefferies asked about the expenditure on regular events amounting to £3,899, shown on the accounts and whether it included fees to visiting speakers. David

explained that the cost of the speakers had not changed but other items included in the figure were subject to change from year to year, including the cost of the sound system, rent to the OSO, cost of chairs from the Methodists etc. A standard fee is paid to speakers, normally £200 but it varies from time to time. The Chairman pointed out that the fees paid are as recommended by the Society of Authors and they usually include expenses.

Another member, Charles Goldsmith wondered why the bank interest shown, £2, was such a small amount. The Treasurer pointed out that bank interest is derisory and hoped the figure would increase in future. Meanwhile complaints can only be addressed to the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank!

William Mortimer proposed and Stephen Perry seconded the motion that the Accounts for 2010 be adopted; the motion was carried.

### **Election of Officers and committee members**

Nominations for committee members were as follows:

Chairman: Fiona Smith: Proposer: William Mortimer; Seconder: Bernard Adams

Vice-Chairman: Helen Willan: Proposer: Paula Mortimer; Seconder: Robin Eastwood

Hon Treasurer: David Minch: Proposer: Joan Wheeler-Bennett; Seconder: Corinne Knowles

Hon. Secretary: Claire Boyling: Proposer: Steve Perry; Seconder: Margaret Marjoram

Committee Member (Membership Secretary): Sarah Kearney: Proposer: Heather Parkinson; Seconder: Hilary Haynes

Committee Member: Patrick Harvey: Proposer: Peter Boyling; Seconder: Nick Phillips

Committee Member: Lucy Hine :Proposer: John Smith; Seconder: Charles Goldsmith.

The above officers and committee members were duly elected on a show of hands.

### **Any other business**

A member pointed out that at last year's summer event the food was delicate and the amount was very small; if they had known this beforehand they would have eaten before they came. Since the event is a self-financing he wondered whether the ticket price should go up and a more generous amount of food supplied. The Chairman pointed out that in the early years a generous amount of food was provided by Diane du Parq but this entailed a great deal of work by the committee who had to prepare food on the day and serve it in the evening and so were unable to enjoy the event themselves. It was decided last year to use professional caterers, who provided beautiful food and servers for a good price. The committee is in the process of discussing what to do for this year's event. The committee is unlikely to prepare the food because too much work is involved. There is unlikely to be a big meal but it will be less delicate than last time. The aim is to provide entertainment with a small amount to eat, not a big meal.

Stephen Beard recognised the hard work of the committee, hoped it was appreciated by the rest of the members and proposed a vote of thanks which was carried. Another member Cathy Sacre added her thanks to Isla Dawes - it was very special to have the books available and to have them signed by the author. Stephen seconded this proposal.

The chairman thanked the members for their support and declared the meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.