

## **Minutes of the Barnes Literary Society AGM held on 22 September 2020 at St Mary's Church, Church Road, Barnes SW13.**

**Present :** Jo Weinberger(JW), Chair; Kathy Owles( KO),Vice – Chair, Kathy Kock (KK), Honorary Secretary; Sue Pandit(SP) Honorary Treasurer, Committee members. Fiona Smith, Venetia Vyvyan, Patrons and 23 society members.

### **1.Introduction by the Chair**

JW thanked the members for staying on for the AGM and said that the normal attendance sheet wouldn't be signed because of Covid restrictions. KO noted the names of all members remaining.

JW highlighted the documents which had been made available to members which include the agenda, minutes of the previous year's AGM, the annual report, treasurer's report and financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019.

### **2.Apologies for absence**

Louise Carr, Caroline Kelsall, Caroline Storey

### **3.Minutes of the AGM held on 27 March 2019**

The resolution to approve the minutes was proposed by Sarah Kearney and seconded by Juggy Pandit and passed with a show of hands.

### **4 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5.Chairmans Report**

JW said she would not read out the whole report but just serve some highlights. She reported that 2019/2020 had been another very successful year for the BLS with excellent speakers. The season began with a sobering talk by Fergal Keane on the severe and long-lasting effects of violence and death within the Irish community and other conflicts around the world. This talk seems especially poignant now after the recent revelations concerning Fergal's own struggles with PTSD.

Adam Kay had been unable to fulfil his commitment to speak in February as a result of a diary mix up but the BLS were very thankful to have Bart van Es instead. JW thanked SP for facilitating this. Bart spoke about his personal journey to uncover the story of a young Jewish girl who came to live with his grandparents. She was one of the many children given away by their parents in the Netherlands to avoid Nazi capture. This very moving story provoked much discussion.

The Summer soiree was a sell- out success once again despite the terrible weather and members were entertained superbly by Alistair McGowan. JW thanked the committee for

all their hard work organising the event with special thanks to Kathy Owles and Louise Carr who masterminded the preparation of the wonderful food.

BLS membership was once again full for the 2018/19 season with a demand for seats that was often too high for the OSO Arts Centre. It was decided to seek a larger venue for the 2019/20 season and St Mary's Church very kindly offered their venue.

The single membership fee remained at £30 equating to £5 a talk and it was decided to discontinue the reduced joint subscription fee. The 2019/20 season continued with the same membership fee and no increase in membership fee is proposed for the following year.

JW thanked the patrons, Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Patrick Neate, Jan Piekowski and Fiona Smith for their support for the BLS and said how delighted we were to see them when they could attend.

JW then announced that three new patrons would be joining. Rhidian Brook, who has been a supporter of the BLS for many years having spoken twice about his novels; Harriett Gilbert, who lives in Barnes and is the presenter of *A Good Read* on Radio 4 and Venetia Vyvyan, owner of the Barnes bookshop and a great supporter of the BLS. JW commented that the BLS were very lucky to have such an esteemed group of patrons.

JW then expressed thanks to all of the people and institutions who support the BLS namely

OSO and Alan Trehitt, (the sound man last season)

St Mary's Church

The BCA

Barnes Bugle

Sarah Arthur (the website)

Venetia at Barnes Bookshop.

JW also thanked the Committee who are all volunteers for their enthusiasm and hard work.

## **6 Honorary Treasurer's Report and Statement of Accounts**

SP referred the members to the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year ended 30 September 2019. SP thanked the independent examiner John Forbes for his assistance and referred members to his report on page 5 of the accounts.

SP reported that income for this year had increased by 17%:

Membership fees up by £930

Guest fees up by £125

Income from ticketed events raised £379.

The main impact however was a generous posthumous donation from Noel Davison who gave the BLS £1000 specifically to upgrade the website.

SP informed the members that guest fees were charged to the member who brings the guest and that members of the general public are not under normal circumstances able to pay to attend the events.

Total expenditure for this year increased by £1032. This was mainly due to expenditure on the website which cost £1549. However the sound system expenses fell by £894 because three out of the six events were held at St Mary's church where the rental fee includes the use of their sound system.

The net result is a surplus of £4452 for this year and general reserves now total £13573.

SP advised members that given the BLS face considerable uncertainties over delivery of the programme for 2020/21, a number of scenarios for potential outcomes had been produced. Given the level of surplus held the committee are confident a high quality programme of speaker events can be delivered and the society can remain financially secure even with a lower level of renewals and the additional costs of producing high quality films of events. SP invited questions on her report but none were raised.

#### **7. Adoption of annual report and accounts.**

Adoption was proposed by Jill Simeoni and seconded by Fina Mason and passed by a show of hands.

#### **8. Notification of intention to propose at the next AGM a resolution to adopt an amended constitution so the BLS can qualify as an unincorporated charitable association.**

JW explained that the committee had decided the BLS should become a charitable unincorporated institution to maximise the fulfilment of its objectives and spend funds more effectively. There would no longer be any need to worry about the tax implications of guest fees. The Covid-19 situation has highlighted the need to retain a surplus for unforeseen eventualities which is difficult with the current structure.

#### **9. Notification of intention to propose at the next AGM a resolution to change the accounting year end of the BLS from 30 September to 31 July.**

SP explained that the rationale for this was to align the income receipts with the events season. Subscription income is received in September /October each year and the events take place from October to June. With the current year end, subscription income for a given season is split across two accounting years.

The next accounting period will be 10 months to 31 July 2021 and hopefully for the next accounting period commencing 1 August 2021, the BLS will have charitable status.

#### **10. Election of officers and members of the committee.**

JW advised that Penny Beck (PB) has decided to resign from the committee. She thanked PB for all her hard work in the publicity role over the last eighteen months which included writing super pen portraits of authors on the website and in Prospect and producing the posters.

Caroline Kelsall (CK) is also stepping down this year after eight years on the committee. JW noted that she has not only been an amazing events secretary, inviting and liaising with all our speakers but also a wise and supportive committee member who will be sorely missed.

JW announced that SP will be taking over CK's role having been helping her for the last few months and initiating great relationships with publishers and agents.

KK will take over as Honorary Treasurer given her experience as an accountant, and Caroline Storey (CS), who was co opted on to the committee in February has agreed to be Honorary Secretary.

JW proposed that the committee be elected en bloc and this was agreed.

The nominations proposers and seconders are as follows.

<b>Post.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Secunder</b>
Chair	Jo Weinberger	Eleanor Davison	Peter Owles
Vice Chair/ Membership	Kathy Owles	Stephen Beard	Sue Bridle
Secretary	Caroline Storey	Hazel Sackey	Sue Allner
Treasurer	Kathy Kock	Paul Weinberger	Dee Lovell
Events	Sue Pandit	Juliet Slot	Maria Harvey
Hospitality.	Louise Carr	Jennifer Wilcox	Belinda Darnton

The election of the officers and committee members was proposed by Patrick Harvey and seconded by Christopher Morecombe and passed by a show of hands.

#### **10. Any other business.**

There was no other business. JW thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.

