

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011 MINUTES.**

Minutes of the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society of Genealogists held at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 64 – 68 Exhibition Road, London, SW7 2PA on Tuesday, 28th June 2011, at 18.00. 67 Members were recorded as being present.

President of the Society, Patric Dickinson, LVO, MA, FSG, took the Chair.

1. The Chairman reported that the minutes of the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting had been circulated in the Genealogists' Magazine and had been published on the Society's website. He pointed out that the Trustees had already approved the Minutes but they were provided for information at the meeting.
2. The Chairman then invited the Members to note the Auditors' report on page 17 of the Annual Report. He highlighted that the Auditors were satisfied that the Society's Accounts gave a true and fair view of the financial position. With no comments the Auditors' report was taken as read.
3. Mr. Colin Allen, FSG, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, presented the Annual Report of the Trustees for 2010. The Chairman highlighted it had been a steady year with a small surplus (due in the main to donations and legacies). The Librarian, Mrs. Sue Gibbons had retired and everyone wished her well, Mr Tim Lawrence had replaced her in the changed role of Head of Library Services. The website continued to be well visited and its position had been enhanced by the addition of a blog and a presence on social media sites. Digitisation continued with material regularly being added to 'MySoG' with the help of additional scanners and the volunteers for whom grateful thanks were expressed. The online courses with Pharos have been successful and will continue, as will onsite lectures. The Family History Show at Olympia was another success with staff and volunteers kept extremely busy. Book publishing continues with the addition this year of the Centenary Book on the Society's history. Mr. Allen thanked fellow Trustees, staff and volunteers for their hard work and help during the year.

Mr. Geoffrey Stone, the Treasurer, presented the Annual Accounts to the meeting. Mr. Stone reported a good surplus, stating it was the best since 2006. He acknowledged the surplus was due to the generosity of members in supporting the fundraising initiatives and thinking of the Society in their legacies. The City Bridge Trust contributed for its third and final year in supporting the Community Officer position and other grants; kind donations allowed the purchase of vital digitisation equipment. The Society's own data online is growing and material previously hosted on Origins is available 24 hours a day, every day to Members in addition to now being hosted on Findmypast. Finding new ways to raise funds has become the way of the future for the Society and will be one of the priorities to enable activities to continue. Mr. Stone urged Members to help by joining the Friends' Scheme and thinking of the Society in their legacies.

The Chairman then invited questions on the Report or the Accounts and Report of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Peter Bailey stated it was sad that the Community post had ended and were there any plans to replace the post. The Treasurer reported that although several other grants had been applied for they had been unsuccessful so there were no plans at present.

Mr. Jim Halstead noticed that several of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) had not been achieved and asked if they were still valid. Mrs June Perrin, the Chief Executive answered on behalf of the Trustees. Although the Board had realised with the current economic climate some of the Indicators would not be reached it was also felt not all were valid. It had been discussed at a Board Meeting with several changes agreed (which will be reported in 2012). These changes included dropping the research KPI. Research is not really an objective in the Society as our mission is to teach people to do their own research. The KPI really only referred to a small 'look-up' service the Society offers. Also with Fundraising becoming a crucial part of activities it is sensible to include this in the KPI's in the future.

Ms Nicola Convine asked if the Open Access area would remain with the loss of the Community Officer. Mr. Colin Allen replied that the area would remain open as self-service at present with the hope some volunteers could be found to assist people.

There being no further questions the Chairman invited a Member of the Society to propose the resolution to approve the Annual Report: this was proposed by Mr. Colin Chapman, FSG, and seconded by Mr. Stephen Chastelle, and approved unanimously.

The Chairman also invited a Member of the Society to propose the resolution to approve the Annual Accounts: this was proposed by Mr. Frank Hardy, FSG, and seconded by Mr. Stephen Chastelle and approved unanimously.

4. Mr. Morris Bierbrier, FSG, proposed the resolution to reappoint the Auditors and authorising the Board of Trustees to fix their remuneration. This was seconded by Mr. David Horwill, FSG, and unanimously approved.
5. The Chairman announced that during the last year Mr. Tim Powys-Lybbe had resigned from the Board of Trustees and he would like to thank him for his services as a Trustee. He has served the Society well and held a position of responsibility and on behalf of the Members he wished to express the heartfelt thanks of the Society to him.

During the year Mr. William Bortrick and Dr. Hugh Guilford retired by rotation and being eligible offered themselves for re-election. Dr. Nick Barratt and Mrs. Diana Bouglas offered themselves for election to the Board of Trustees. There being four nominees and three spaces on the Board there was to be a ballot. Members were invited to complete the ballot papers they had been given as they signed in and submit them in the ballot boxes provided. At the end of the process the ballot papers were taken into a side room to be counted and the result was announced later in the meeting which is reported further on in these minutes.

6. The Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Articles of Association, proposed to re-elect Mr. Patric Dickinson as President of the Society for a further three year term. The vote was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously
7. The Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Articles of Association, proposed to re-elect The Rt. Rev. John Kingsmill Cavell, President Boyd-Packer, Professor Peter Spufford, Fergus Gillespie and Dr. Elizabeth Hallam-Smith as Vice-Presidents of the Society for a further three year term. The vote was put to the meeting and agreed unanimously.

8. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Colin Allen, FSG, announced the award of Certificates of Appreciation to: Peter Darvill, Pam Durrant, Nancy Furlong, Norma Leach, Phil Marris, Hans Norton and Tony Simpson. Those present received their certificates and they were all congratulated
9. Mrs. June Perrin, Secretary to the Fellows announced the result of the election to the Fellowship of the Society, and was pleased to announce that Mrs. Lydia Collins and Mr. Ian Waller had been elected to join the Fellows. They were both present thus were able to receive their certificates and be congratulated.
10. The Chairman announced, this year to coincide with our Centenary, HRH Prince Michael of Kent was able to make his award personally at the Centenary Gala Dinner. The award was made to Mr. Alex Graham and Wall to Wall TV for their huge contribution in raising the profile and interest in Genealogy worldwide.

The ballot not quite being ready the Chairman adjourned the meeting for a short period for an informal question session at 6.35pm. He re-convened the meeting at 6.45pm to announce the results of the election of Trustees.

5b. The results of the ballot were;

Dr. Nick Barratt	226
Mr. William Bortrick	43
Mrs. Diana Bouglas	236
Mr. Hugh Guilford	217

The Chairman reported the apparent differences in numbers were due to the proxy votes that had been allocated to Mr. Colin Allen, FSG as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Alec Tritton raised the question as to why the ballot had not appeared on the Agenda to the meeting. He felt that the fact Mr. Colin Allen, FSG was able to outvote the entire meeting was undemocratic and unsatisfactory. This fact appeared to be supported by several others in the meeting. Mr. Colin Allen, FSG answered he had taken advice on the matter and exercised his vote as had been his right and that he was not aware he had done anything wrong.

Mr. Tim Powys-Lybbe stated he felt the whole matter should be reviewed and put back before the Members.

The Chairman, Mr Patric Dickinson felt he could safely say the Trustees would be discussing the matter.

The meeting ended at 6.55pm.

### **Informal Session**

During the informal session no questions were asked so Mr. Colin Allen, FSG updated the meeting on a question that had been asked the previous year about female representation and concerns of people who had left the Board of Trustees. He stated that the Board had looked into the issue and taken on board the items raised by the previous female Board Members. He was pleased also to report a female had stood for election this year.

## **Annual General Meeting and Voting Procedures**

The Trustees took the earliest practical opportunity when together at the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July to respond to the dissatisfaction expressed at the AGM regarding the proxy voting arrangements.

The Trustees have taken legal advice and consequently established that the voting procedure was legal, and the result technically valid. However they also acknowledge that there were shortcomings in the process, and concede that not only was the result not morally correct, but also that the process was not a very democratic way of holding an election.

Steps have immediately been taken to ensure this will not happen again. Standing Orders have been changed to ensure that in future anyone appointing a proxy will have the opportunity to instruct the proxy how to vote. A document will be issued with or attached to the proxy form which will permit Members to state their voting options. The documents will also be available on the website to enable electronic delivery.

Mr William Bortrick has been co-opted onto the Board of Trustees.