



THE FARNHAM SOCIETY
Minutes of 76th Annual General Meeting
held at Runfold House
19th June 2023

Executive Committee Members Present:

Alan Gavaghan – Chairman (AG)	Michael Blower MBE - Vice-President (MB)
John Cattell – Treasurer (JC)	Simon Bradbury (SB)
Richard Hunt CBE (RH)	Yolande Hesse (YH)
Colin Jordan (CJ)	

The Chairman welcomed all members to the 76th Annual General Meeting and thanked Michael Blower and his family for allowing the use of the marquee and the grounds for a pre-AGM picnic.

Apologies: Joan Ellis, Paul Whitfield.

1. Minutes of the 75th Annual General Meeting held on 25th November 2022

The Minutes had been circulated and were approved.

2. Chairman's Report

A written report had been circulated. Colin Jordan was warmly welcomed as a new member of the Executive Committee and would be taking on the role of Membership Secretary. Membership was slightly reduced which reflected the effects of Covid and the inability to hold public meetings. There were approximately 650 members which still positions the Society as one of the largest in the country.

The submission to the *Farnham Infrastructure Programme* was detailed but with prime recommendations of a right turn from the bottom of Castle Street, Woolmead Road should be two-way with the relevant part of East Street one way and the lower end of Downing Street to be two way allowing forward exit from Waggon Yard Car Park, thereby avoiding the use of the circulatory system. It is understood that the recommendations were recently accepted except for the Woolmead Road proposal.

As previously reported, AG is standing down as Chairman having held the position for almost 14 years and he will be passing on this responsibility into the safe hands of Richard Hunt. The report and additional comments were accepted.

3. Adoption of Accounts for Financial Year Ending 31st March 2023

A written report had been circulated. John Cattell explained that Investment Income remains a problem and is being carefully monitored and where possible corrective action taken. As an example, £300 per month is being transferred from the Business Savings Account to Equities. Income is slightly down which reflects the impact of Covid and lack of public meetings. Overall, the situation was satisfactory and our financial base secure. Roger

Smith of Milne Eldridge would remain as our Inspector of Accounts and the membership fee for 2023 would remain at the existing level. The Report and additional comments were accepted.

4. Committee Reports

- a) Planning: Yolande Hesse drew attention to designation difficulties for Farnham and that there would continue to be a balance to be struck between the need for housing and preservation of green spaces. Planning applications continued to grow in numbers and were scrutinised each week, but it had become necessary to become selective and pay attention to Conservation Areas, major planning applications and those which may have a wider impact on areas of Farnham. We have been actively involved in discussions on Brightwell House and were awaiting the outcome of discussions between Crest and Waverley BC. It was encouraging that two recent appeals by developers had been rejected by the Inspector and it was hoped this would be reflected in the awaited decision on the Waverley Lane development. Zofia Lovell then explained the complicated background leading up to the Waverley Lane appeal. A proposal to remove household applications from the jurisdiction of the Waverley Planning Committee to council officers was felt to restrict the input of locally elected councillors and a letter of objection would be sent. The comments were accepted.
- b) Events and In Conversation: Richard Hunt reported that having emerged from the major restrictions of Covid, events are now at planning stage with the intention that they will take place on the second Thursday of October, November, and December. The In Conversation programme will continue with the most recent being with Gavin Stride previously director of The Maltings and reflections on the past activities of the Society with Alan Gavaghan. The comments were accepted.
- c) Heritage Open Days and Media: A written report had been circulated. Simon Bradbury confirmed that the 2022 programme had proved successful although complicated by the sad death of the Queen which required the cancellation of the Castle event and the need to alter some venues. Planning for this year is virtually complete with the brochure about to be printed. Heritage Open Day will take place from the 8th to the 17th of September. Tours of UCA will be available this year which is a major addition to last year's programme. Communication with members and the public continue through the Newsletter and Monthly Updates with social media being used to find a wider audience. We will be participating in The Bourne Show on the 1st July where it is hoped we will attract further membership. The report and additional comments were accepted.

5. Election/Re Election of Honorary Officers

The following appointments were proposed, seconded, and approved by the meeting:

Chairman – Richard Hunt, proposed by Michael Blower, seconded by Simon Bradbury. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman – Simon Bradbury, proposed by Richard Hunt, seconded by John Cattell. Motion carried.

Treasurer – John Cattell, proposed by Richard Hunt, seconded by Simon Bradbury. Motion carried.

Vice President – Alan Gavaghan, proposed by Michael Blower, seconded by Richard Hunt. Motion carried.

6. Election/Re Election and Confirmation of Committee Members

The following appointments were proposed, seconded, and approved by the meeting:

Yolande Hesse – Planning Committee, proposed by John Cattell seconded by Richard Hunt.

Motion carried.

Colin Jordan – Membership Secretary, proposed by John Cattell, seconded by Richard Hunt.

Motion carried.

7. Any Other Business

Alan Gavaghan gave an outline of some of the key events occurring over the years and thanked the membership and particularly members of the Executive Committee for their unflagging support and encouragement. He was grateful that he had been given the opportunity to meet and work with many people who had the common bond of caring for Farnham and the wish to pass on this heritage to the next generation. It had been a great privilege and it was with mixed feelings that he was standing down as Chairman. However, he was delighted that Richard Hunt had agreed to take on the role and was certain the Society would continue to flourish under his leadership.

Richard Hunt responded by acknowledging the privilege and honour of taking on this task and committed himself to the Society's principles of protecting our heritage and shaping the future. There was much to do and there was an increasing need for more active involvement from members. He then welcomed Alan Gavaghan's continuing involvement as a Vice President and with all members toasting with a glass of wine, he presented Alan with a memento in the form of a painting by Michael Blower of Stella's Cottage.

8. Close of Meeting

The meeting ended at 7.20pm.