

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT INCORPORATED INTO THE MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (34<sup>TH</sup>) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2020**

Dear Members,

I would like to start by thanking those who have paid their subscriptions to date and also those who have very generously added a donation. The coming year 2020-2021 will be a difficult time for us all but as a Society we will hope to soldier on with your help. If you have not already paid your subscription, please give this consideration.

**MINUTES OF THE 33<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:**

The minutes of the above Annual General Meeting were discussed by the Committee and it was agreed they were a true representation of all that took place. They were proposed by the Chairman, Alan Armour and seconded by Gavin McDowall, Membership Secretary. They appeared on the Society web page shortly afterwards for all members to read.

**MATTERS ARISING:**

None.

**TO SUMMARISE 2019-2020:**

As a Society, we were fortunate that our lecture season was barely disturbed, having managed to enjoy talks from six of our seven speakers before Government regulations and health and safety measures obliged us to cancel the April one due to the looming threat of a lockdown. All the lectures were enjoyed which could be seen by the numbers turning up but more importantly by the questions that were asked of the speaker, usually over a cup of tea or glass of wine after the meeting was over. Interest and curiosity had been aroused and this is what the Committee attempts to achieve when selecting speakers. Our Summer outing was a casualty due to the virus but we can only hope that life will return to normal eventually and we can get out and about together on our annual outing.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Attached to this e-mail is a copy of the Society's accounts for the period 1/9/19 – 31/8/20 and duly audited by Ben Wood. There are some items worthy of note which include the gift to Lord Cameron and donations to the Musselburgh goodwill fund which supplies food to those less fortunate in the Musselburgh

area. Donations were also given to The Abbey Trust and the Musselburgh Camera Club. The loss of £226.95 can, in part, be attributed to these gifts and donations which your Committee felt were worthy. However, in the main, the loss was due to a reduction in our income from subscriptions. Membership numbers dropped by around 20 for the year and it is hard to find a reason why this should occur. Gavin McDowall, our membership secretary, worked tirelessly to raise numbers but it appeared that 2019-20 was one of those years when previous members were occupied with other things. Please let us hope this does not happen again, despite Covid-19.

### **RE-APPOINTMENT AND RETIRAL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

George Kinnaird and Gavin McDowall having completed yet another two years as Committee members were due for re-election. I am glad to say they have both agreed to continue for a further two years, duly proposed by myself, Alan Armour and seconded by Alan Stevens. However, it is regretted the Society lost the services of Bryon Liddle last November when he resigned from the Committee for personal reasons. His knowledge of Musselburgh and its surrounds plus many years of service on other Committees was of considerable value.

### **RE-APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

The Auditor, Ben Wood was approached by the Chairman to ask if he would stand again. He agreed to this and his appointment was later put to the Committee for approval. This was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by G. Kinnaird and passed unanimously.

### **PLANNING MATTERS:**

Alan Stevens continued to keep an eye on any planning applications made to East Lothian Council Planning Department and it was through his diligence the Society was able to point out to the Council any applications which did not meet the criteria of the Conservation Area. Whilst we are never able to have 100% success with our objections and suggestions, we do feel the Council does listen to us from time to time.

### **RETIRAL OF OUR PATRON LORD CAMERON:**

It was with great regret on the October evening of the AGM we had to say "goodbye" to our Patron Lord Cameron who had served the Society with dignity and generosity of spirit over some sixteen years. He spoke kindly of those who

had run your Society during his tenure and expressed his sadness that age had suggested to him that he take a back seat. A suitable presentation had been organised but, regrettably, Covid-19 intervened. With no AGM to present him with the Society's gift, this was, instead, given at a suitably socially distanced ceremony at his home by George Kinnaird, Andrew Coulson and Alan Stevens. Those of you who purchase the Musselburgh Courier and in particular on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, would have been able to read the article on Lord Cameron and his presentation on retiral.

### **APPOINTMENT OF NEW PATRON:**

We were fortunate to find someone with an understanding of the aims of the Society and a depth of knowledge in many spheres to take Lord Cameron's place. Finlay Lockie introduced himself at the December lecture and it was apparent he was a person who was not only interested in the aims of the Society but had practical knowledge in restoring one of Scotland's important family homes. With the pandemic paralysing the country to a greater or lesser extent, there has not been the opportunity to meet together with him at this Annual General Meeting, nor to enjoy a glass of wine or a cup of tea and chat.

### **ANNUAL PLAQUE AWARD:**

At our December 2019 meeting the members attending had the opportunity to make a selection for the winner of the plaque award. There were six or seven choices offered from photographs kindly produced and mounted on a board by Alan Stevens. The candidates covered a variety of subjects. When voting was complete, there was a clear winner in the Mussel sculpture which is sited on the seafront on the Edinburgh road. The runner-up was the Archer at the Mall so it was apparent that both sculptures had left an impression. Because of Covid-19 it was not possible to award the plaque to the sculptor at that time but there was a meeting in September with East Lothian Council and the wheels have been set in motion.

### **THE SOCIETY'S FUTURE:**

Again, I have to appeal to you as members to help maintain the strength of the Society by volunteering to come on the Committee. There is no point in a Society boasting of having around 100 names on its books if there is nobody prepared to run it. I will be resigning as Chair at the 2021 AGM having then served my four years in office. I will also be resigning as Treasurer at that time. Also, with no Secretary, this work is spread around the committee – not an ideal

situation. Your Society is being run by a body of men who boast their youngest member is a lad of some 76 years with the oldest fast approaching his middle eighties. New blood is needed, which seems to be anyone under 65(!) as well as at least one lady member to inject some common sense into the workings of the Committee. Perhaps the end of the Society is not quite “nigh” but be assured it is not far away. At a Committee meeting in August a deal of time was spent discussing which Club or Society would be best to amalgamate with rather than see the demise of your Society through a failure to have volunteers for the committee.

That is my report for the year which will also be taken as the minutes of the AGM, subject to approval by your committee and posted on the web page. If you have any questions you would like answered, then please direct them to me through my e-mail address: [alan.macd.armour@gmail.com](mailto:alan.macd.armour@gmail.com)

Alan Armour  
Chair and Treasurer