

MUSSELBURGH CONSERVATION SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 35TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 14TH OCTOBER 2021 AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH HALL

The meeting opened at 7.30pm with the Chairman, Alan Armour, welcoming the members and thanking them for their attendance.

According to the signature sheet, there were 35 members present.

Apologies were received from G. Burnett, A. Coulson, C. Coulson, J. Herraghty, B. Turner, A. Hadden and G. Cunningham.

The Minutes of the 2020 Committee and Chair Annual Report were considered. Mr. Armour referred the members to the section concerning the presentation of a retiral gift to Lord Cameron after many years of service to the Society. Due to Covid regulations, the presentation was made at the home of Lord and Lady Cameron by senior committee member George Kinnaird. Lord Cameron responded by saying how much he had enjoyed his term as patron and thanked the Society for the generous gift. There being no further comments it was agreed the minute was a true representation of the year's events and was proposed by A. Stevens and seconded by G. Kinnaird.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

With the onset of Covid-19, the year 2020-2021 could have proved to have been a difficult time for the Society but in many ways, the reverse was the case. The matters affecting the members were the cancellation of the annual outing and the difficulty in holding an Annual General Meeting plus the problem of being unable to meet in the church hall for our season of Winter lectures. With regard to the first, Gavin McDowall had sought new and suitable venues to visit for our outing but his efforts came to nothing as we were prevented by the lockdown regulations. Similarly, the Annual General Meeting for 2020 was unable to be held and the Committee agreed that a report should be sent out by email to the members. It had been suggested that the AGM could have been zoomed but it was felt by the Committee that some members, who were not familiar with what was a fairly new concept at that time, or did not have the facilities to receive a zoomed message, would be excluded. The Committee acted in the best interests of the Society and its members and there was only one dissenting voice.

Any concerns about the Winter lectures proved to be without foundation as, apart from the cancellation of one lecture and the addition of another at the end of the season, the lectures were successfully zoomed to the members. This met with many comments expressing pleasure at this new method of presentation. Whether this was because of the excellent quality of the speakers or because it was possible to sit at home in the warmth with a glass of something to hand, was uncertain. Perhaps a bit of both. Certainly, all speakers were well received and the Committee hopes that the coming season, starting this evening will be equally well received. It was hoped attendance at future lectures will be done with due stoicism as the warmth of home was left for the church hall. The Society cannot function if no effort is made to meet friends and acquaintances. Thanks must go to Andrew Coulson who zoomed us all and to Gavin for his many emails giving encouragement to get online. The average number of homes tuning in was about 33 and as most were couples watching, it would be fair to say we had around the same numbers as would be attending at the church hall.

It has been decided to set up a Facebook page for the Society and Celia Coulson is in charge of that. Please sign in to this as all are welcome. It is hoped to be a source of information from other Societies and Clubs in Musselburgh.

As always, the Committee has been searching for new Committee members to take on some of the tasks and this year has met with success. It proved necessary to find new blood from outside the society membership although I am glad to report that member George Cunningham has offered his services as Press Relations contact. From outside the Society, we have gained the services of Camelia Symes and Melanie Roccio. All three were co-opted on to the Committee through the year and as you will read from the agenda this is to be confirmed at this meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The set of accounts before you for the year ended 31st August 2021 have been audited by auditor Ben Wood. The figures show a surplus of £322.54 which can be accounted for in no small way by the generosity of the members in their donations. Despite reducing the annual subscription to £10 for all, subscription income shows parity with last year. A gift of £100 to the Musselburgh Area Partnership in a previous year was returned as unused and a small refund received from the cancelled insurance. This provided an income with subscriptions of £1221.38 against an expenditure of £892.82. Main items of expenditure include £172.68 for zooming fees for committee meetings and lectures. Others were printing, stationery, stamps and the Design Award plaque which showed a sharp rise in cost from last year. There were no hall fees but we did give a donation of £100 as a gesture of goodwill. Notification was received that the hall rental would rise from £25 to £35 per lecture from October 2021.

The Treasurer then pointed out that the likely income for the year 2021-22 would not be sufficient to cover overheads unless the members were generous once again in their donations. With the need for the insurance cover to be reinstated to at least public liability level with additional cover for the Committee, hall rental and other rising costs, the subscription of £10 would likely provide a shortfall of £200 - £300. However, the members were reminded that the subscription was left at £10 for the coming year as a gesture of thanks to the members for standing by the Society during a very difficult time which saw many clubs and societies either going into hibernation or folding. Any deficit would be met out of capital reserves. However, it is recommended the subscription for 2022-23 should rise to £15 minimum with the continued hope of donations from the members.

There being no questions, the accounts were duly proposed by G. Kinnaird and seconded by M. Roccio.

CO-OPTIONS, RE-APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

The Chairman referred the members to the list on the agenda of the above. He advised that each appointment had been duly proposed and seconded in accordance with the Constitution but members would have the opportunity to object or make comments as necessary to any or all of the recommendations. The list is attached.

New Executive Committee Members recently co-opted and to be confirmed at this meeting:

Camelia Symes: Proposed by: A.M. Armour Seconded by: Barry Turner

George Cunningham: Proposed by: A.M. Armour Seconded by: Gavin McDowall

Melanie Roccio: Proposed by A.M. Armour Seconded by: Alan Stevens

Election of Office Bearers:

Honorary Treasurer: Camelia Symes: Proposed by: Barry Turner Seconded by: George Cunningham

Honorary Secretary: Andrew Coulson: Proposed by: Alan Stevens Seconded by: George Kinnaird

Re- Election of Executive Committee Members: The following retire after two years and have offered themselves for re-election:

Andrew Coulson: Proposed by: Camelia Symes Seconded by: Alan Armour

Alan Stevens: Proposed by Barry Turner; Seconded by: Gavin McDowall

Barry Turner: Proposed by Melanie Roccio; Seconded by: George Kinnaird

Re-Appointment of Auditor

Ben Wood: Proposed by A.M. Armour; seconded by C. Symes.

Appointment of New Chair:

Camelia Symes: Proposed by A.M. Armour; seconded by Finlay Lockie.

There being no objections or additional appointments from the floor, all nominees were confirmed by general agreement.

The Chairman informed the members that George Cunningham had been appointed to a new role as Press Relations Officer with the remit to provide a piece for the Musselburgh Courier at least once a month. This would help to bring the Society to the minds of the readers. Melanie Roccio runs the Love Musselburgh Group and will assist Gavin McDowall with subscription collection. Camelia Symes takes on the roles originally held by Alan Armour who retires from the Committee.

Retiral of Executive Member – A.M. Armour

The retiring Chairman thanked the members and Committee for their support through his 4 years in office as Chairman and Treasurer. He said he had been fortunate to have the support of long-standing committee members who had made his work with them all the easier. He thanked Alan Stevens, Andrew Coulson, Gavin McDowall, George Kinnaird and Barry Turner for their dedication to the Society through many years of service and congratulated them on their stamina.

Camelia Symes

Mr. Armour made a brief introduction to the new Chair and Treasurer. He said the Society had been fortunate in being able to persuade Camelia to take on the roles vacated by himself and would prove to be a valuable asset to the Society. Not only was new blood being introduced to the roles but Camelia would be only the second woman to hold the post of chair.

The new Chair then took over the meeting from Alan Armour and gave the members a brief history of herself.

OUR PATRON, FINLAY LOCKIE

The Patron presented the retiring Chair with a small gift from the Society and an appropriate response was made. Mr. Lockie then went on to congratulate the Committee for their efforts during this and previous years. He spoke of the need for active participation in Musselburgh to maintain the ethos of the town and its environs. The Flood Protection Scheme was a case in point and due consideration had to be given as to what the effect on the town would be and where responsible changes could be made. He closed by congratulating Ms Symes on her appointment as chair and offered every assistance.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.55pm. There then followed a talk by Liz Hunter of East Lothian Council on “Active Travel Initiatives in and around Musselburgh.”

