

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE MENPHYS HUB,
SOUTH WIGSTON, ON TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.15PM**

69 Members were in attendance, plus 2 visitors.

1. The AGM was formally opened by the Chairman Peter Cousins.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Liz Ward, John Stevenson, Neil Hancock, Elaine French, Sandra Smith, Elizabeth Fawcett, Janet Mills, Gill Boulter, Shirley Moxey, Joy Heskins, Sue Henderson.

3. AGM MINUTES 2023 & MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman informed the meeting that the minutes of the AGM 2023 had been circulated by email and letter to all the members and asked for any comments. No comments were raised.

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by: Mike Forryan

Seconded by: Steve Marquis

All in favour: Yes

Anyone against: No

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2023

As you will hear later from reports on membership and our finances, we had a very stable year in 2023, attracting new members and sponsorships.

During the year we were duly entertained and informed at the monthly meetings at the Menphys Hub, with a wide range of subjects ranging from missing persons, Leicester Cathedral, robbery, and murder! Special thanks go to Dave Andrews for stepping in at our Christmas meeting when the booked speaker was unavailable due to illness.

During 2023 the Society attended several outside events including the history show at Menphys in February and the Beaumanor history day in March. Both events were very well attended, with lots of interest shown in the GWHS, and attracted new members. At the Beaumanor show we were approached by the Leicester Historical and Archaeological Society's Public Heritage Fund about the possibility of us getting a grant for equipment. You will hear more about that later in the Treasurer's report.

Later in the year we attended the Christmas event in the Peace Park in Wigston and took part in the Christmas Capers in South Wigston promoting the Society

and selling calendars and books.

Our Christmas 2023 meeting and party reverted to the previous format of drinks and snacks after the much larger event in 2022 which had been funded by a bequest from Stella Tweed.

The Heritage Centre is seeing a steady stream of visitors, both local and from further afield, and we would really wish to recruit more volunteers both to back up our current staff, and to look at the possibility of extra opening. If you are interested in helping, even for just a few hours a month, please contact myself or Joan Rowbottom or Elaine French who will be happy to show you round and discuss what is involved.

Finally, as you are probably aware, our Treasurer, Colin Towell, is standing down at this AGM after 16 years in the post, and our Secretary, Ann Cousins, is also standing after 11 years, between them a total of 27 years' service to the Society. Could we please show our appreciation for Colin and Ann in the usual way (applause).

This of course will leave us without a secretary in post for 2024 to 2025. If anyone is interested and would like to know more about the duties involved, please contact myself or Ann.

Peter Cousins

5. MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Last year was our first full year of meetings at the Menphys Hub in Bassett Street. Attendance at our meetings averaged 60+ members with a total of 32 visitors across the 9 meetings.

We had 25 new members join the Society in 2023 but had approximately 10 members resigned for various reasons. Sadly, we also had a small number of members pass away during the year. At the end of the year, we had a total membership of 174.

We have started the New Year of 2024 on a positive note adding 5 new members. At the end of January, we currently have a membership of 179.

Thank you to those members who have already paid their 2024 subs. For those who still need to pay subs of £12 for concessionary or £15 for full membership, may we remind you that there is now an additional method of payment available that we hope will be convenient for members, which is to pay online via the GWHS website by credit or debit card. This is in addition to our preferred method of payment by credit transfer direct from your bank. Cash payments are obviously

also an option paid at one of our meetings or at the Heritage Centre or to a Committee Member.

Finally, I need to announce that I plan to stand down from my role as Membership Secretary at the AGM in 2025 but I am willing to continue as a Committee Member and I shall continue to help with membership issues through to June next year.

If any member would be willing to take on the Membership Secretary role next year, could they please advise Peter, Judith, or any Committee Member.

Roger Whalley

6. WEBMASTER'S REPORT

The website continues to attract a regular flow of visitors, 13,600 since August 2021. The most popular section of the website continues to be the photo archive, with over 3000 hits.

The Heritage Centre webpage is also well accessed with nearly 4000 hits. A new feature added to the Heritage Centre page is the index of our book holdings at the Heritage Centre. Also added to the website is the facility to request a search of the Heritage Centre archives by using an online search form. The online store has also been updated and accessed through the home page.

In January I added the facility for members to rejoin, or new members to join, online by debit or credit card via SumUp. This system, instead of using PayPal, saves the Society a considerable amount on processing fees.

If you come across any difficulties using the various pages or find any broken links, please do let me know.

Peter Cousins

7. PUBLICATIONS REPORT

During 2023 we launched several new publications. Firstly, a new 2023 version of the Wigston Magna Town Trail. The original version was published in 1989 by the Society, which needed a major update. The booklet contains details of the locations of 26 buildings of interest in Wigston, along with a walk map.

Next, we produced 10 Row, researched and written by our own member Mark Startin. Based on his research into his ancestors who lived on 10 Row, the book covers the period 1861 to 1921, and the 1939 Register, giving an in-depth analysis

of all the occupants of the houses.

After a break in 2023, we launched the Calendar for 2024, put together by Mike Forryan.

Peter Cousins

8. HERITAGE CENTRE REPORT

Read by Peter Cousins on behalf of Elaine French and Joan Rowbottom

It has been a busy year at the Heritage Centre with group visits and the popular afternoon talks, the latter being a good steady income for the Centre.

On the second Saturdays of each month, we try to organise special themes which attract visitors. These have included:

In February a Family History Day, in March we welcomed the FWK Museum, in June the Wigston Civic Society, in August the Anstey History Group, and in September the Belgrave Heritage Trust.

In March we hosted an evening for the local Scouts.

Elaine French and Peter Cousins ran another fully attended family history course. We hope to hold a further course later in 2024.

Joan Rowbottom would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers who do regular slots running the Centre, greeting, and showing around new visitors, and for their help and expertise with family history research. Many thanks to Elaine French for the setting up of the new Railway Corner feature, and to her husband Mick for his donations of railway books which were sold and all proceeds going towards the running of the Heritage Centre.

The Centre has also recently had donations from Hettie Schultka via David Burley of more Countesthorpe archives and data.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT

This is the report on the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2023.

Subscriptions and visitor's fees were slightly up on 2022 but we did not recover so much in relation to the Bulletin sold to the Framework Knitters Museum due to them not requiring their part in our Bulletin.

The Christmas meeting income was considerably up on last year and costs were reduced because we did the catering ourselves, leading to a surplus of

£167.

Bank interest was at last something worth having but it must be remembered that we now pay bank charges amounting to 96.00 of the total charges of 108.66, the rest being card charges. In all regular income was £3188.96 slightly up on last year but £567.77 in excess of regular costs of £2,621.19. (last year a deficit of £182.09).

These costs were broadly similar to last year except for room hire at £609.99 representing a full year's hire of the Menphys meeting room whereas in 2022 we were closed for the early months of the year. On Bulletin printing, there was again a decrease in costs due to more members receiving their bulletins by email. Visits this year produced a small profit of £63.90.

The grant from the Public Heritage Fund of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society of £1,914.00 covered the full cost of the interactive TV screen but additional costs of £46.80 were incurred in materials for fixing the screen to the wall.

There were again several events arranged by our Chairman and the income from them totals £1,197.10 as detailed in the extreme left column of figures. In addition, we received donations of £1,009.10 including one, anonymous generous sum, and many small items including those left in the donation boxes we now have around the Heritage Centre and at our monthly meetings.

Our sponsorship scheme resulted in receipts of £1,100.00 for which we are extremely appreciative.

During the year, only 10 DVDs were sold (last year 54) at a profit of £40.00. Dave Andrews, who narrates the DVDs, has received his usual commission of £1 per copy which he donates to charity.

At the end of the year only 94 calendars of the 150 ordered had been sold, the cost of those not sold has been written off leaving a cost of £88.90 in the accounts. Some of the remaining stock has been sold at a reduced price in 2024.

In terms of books, we sold a total of 122 copies of the main titles (107 last year) resulting in a profit of £489.81.

Therefore, the total number of DVDs, calendars and books sold was 132

compared with 161 in 2022.

As a result, the overall surplus for the year was £2,678.77 compared with £2,362.36 last year. which, after non-cash adjustments, lead to bank balances increasing to £13,403.55.

These accounts have been examined by Garry Davies, and so once again, our thanks, go to him. Garry has not put himself forward for re-election this time after serving as examiner for 16 years since 2007. I suggest that the Society sends him a letter of thanks.

My own thanks go to Peter Cousins who has controlled the sales and postage where needed of DVDs, calendars, books and other sundry goods at the Heritage Centre and by post, and to Roger Whalley as membership secretary dealing with subscriptions.

I present these accounts for your approval.

I am standing down as Treasurer after 16 years when I took over on the death of Brian Bilson whose books I audited (as it was then called) for 12 years from 1995. I offer my successor my best wishes and can assure him that I am only a phone call away if he needs help!

I present these accounts for your approval.

Colin Towell

Proposed by: Stuart Mucklejohn

Seconded by: Sue Lobb

All in favour: YES

Anyone against: NO

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The nominations for the Officers and Committee members are:

Chairman

Peter Cousins

Vice Chairman

Judith Proctor

Secretary

Position Vacant

Treasurer

Richard Darlaston

Membership Secretary

Roger Whalley

Bulletin Editor
Heritage Centre Librarian
Heritage Centre Co-Ordinator

Steve Marquis
Elaine French
Joan Rowbottom

Committee Members

Neil Hancock
Ann Cousins
Colin Towell
Sue Lobb

The Chairman asked if we could vote for the nominations en bloc. This was agreed. A vote then took place:

Proposed by: Peter Smart
Seconded by: Graham Austen
All in favour: YES
Anyone against: NO

11. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTS EXAMINER

Colin Towell proposed John Lowe, the current Treasurer of the Oadby & Wigston Lions Club and suggested by Richard Darlaston, as the Examiner for the Society's Accounts.

Proposed by: Colin Towell
Seconded by: Mike Hibbitt
All in favour. YES
Anyone against: NO

12. SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2025/6

The Chairman informed the members that due to the ever increasing costs such as hall hire and speaker fees, and the increased rent at the Heritage Centre, that we could not yet fix a subscription rate for 2025/6, and therefore, and like last year, members will be informed when a decision is made.

13. A.O.B

Joan Rowbottom enquired if there would be another History Show at Menphys this year. Peter Cousins replied nothing is arranged for this year.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm, and was followed with a talk by Steve Marquis on Medieval Wigston, which he kindly gave free of charge.