

## **Hunstanton & District Civic Society - Minutes of the AGM held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 11 December 2013**

The Chairman, Andrew Murray, welcomed everyone to the meeting, the first frosty evening of the winter. He made a final call for nominations for committee members. The Hunstanton Civic Society is one of 290 societies with a total membership of some 75,000 affiliated to Civic Voice, the national organisation and pays a £1.50 capitation fee. Civic Voice leads and co-ordinates national campaigns and combines community action with a sense of place. In 2013, it promoted an All Party Parliamentary Group which has enlisted about 100 MP members. This has enabled constructive dialogue particularly concerning changes to planning rules and the lobbying bill. Civic Voice sends out regular newsletters by e-mail concerning its campaigns and successes. By being members of Civic Voice we are entitled to one a day pass per year to visit English Heritage properties and a one day pass to visit National Trust properties. That concession does not at present apply to privately owned properties but membership of the Historic Houses Association grants free admission to 26 properties in the Eastern Region including Walsingham and Woburn Abbeys, Elton, Holkham and Houghton Halls.

1. There were 73 members and 7 visitors present and **apologies** were received from: Margi Blunden, Gillian Lawson, Ken Lawson, Fiona Mumford, Ann Newman, Stephen Newman, Margaret Thorpe and Tim Williams.

2. The **minutes** of the AGM in 2012 were presented. It was noted that the landscape architects were to have a public consultation on their ideas for regeneration of the Spinney. There had been 9 talks evenings plus the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the death of Henry le Strange, a very successful 3 day railway exhibition, participation in Civic Day, the Family Fossil Hunt and Heritage Open Day. Visits to Miss Savage's Hall House in Wells and the coach trip to Southwold and its wonderful pier. The 60th anniversary of the formation of 67th USAF Air Rescue Squadron at Sculthorpe was marked with a parade organised by John Maiden. The area around the Coal Shed Gallery had been changed to a railway theme. The minutes of the 2012 AGM were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

3. The Trustees report consists of **Chairman's report** which had been circulated in September with the membership renewal papers. The main points were:

i) The opening of the Heritage Centre at 15 The Green through the great generosity of the owners, Solveig and Derek Ward. This was combined with the hard work done by Brian Holmes in arranging the exhibits, the beautiful display cabinets made by Harry Croad, the loan of artefacts collected on the beach by Norman Whye and the loan of memorabilia by John Smith. We need to plan for its long term future.

ii) 2013 had been a challenging year because Andrew Murray had been elected in his absence as Secretary in 2008 and had combined that role with being Chair for the past 2 years - a feature that was not healthy for the society.

iii) There had been consultations about the sites where houses might be built, about marine management and on-street parking.

iv) There was particular disappointment that planning permission had been given to Marston's to build the HoneyStone Pub/ Restaurant blocking the former rail track bed.

v) The coach trip to the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow organised by Margi Blunden.

vi) Participation in maintaining Civic Society and other flower beds and gardens in and around the town in preparation for Anglia in Bloom. A Certificate of Recognition had been presented to Susan Boxell. This success means that Hunstanton should be invited to participate in Britain in Bloom in 2014.

vii) The 60th anniversary of the flood on 31 January 1953 was marked with a parade by the USAF 67th, pipes & drums from Norwich and a commemorative Norfolk Green bus recognising Reis Leming's bravery.

viii) There were 8 monthly talks on a variety of subjects organised by Brian Holmes.

ix) We did not participate in Civic Day, Heritage Open Day or the Carnival, but did have a Family Fossil Hunt on the beach led by Norman Whye.

x) A pamphlet has been produced by Ivy Scales and Margi Blunden to illustrate the work of the Arts and Crafts architect Herbert George Ibberson and it is available from the Tourist Information Centre and the Heritage Centre.

xi) The 67th USAF squadron returned on Remembrance Sunday and was able to visit the Heritage Centre shortly after its official opening by Tim Bentinck - alias Dick Barton / David Archer.

xii) Although it was extremely gratifying that 26 people had volunteered to man the Heritage Centre, additional volunteers would be welcome. Terry Ashworth is now arranging the duty rota.

xiii) Administrative activities included monitoring local planning applications and the effects of National Planning Regulations; input to the Conservation Areas Advisory Panel; response to Site Specific Allocations; liaison with Civic Voice and other Civic and amenity societies.

xiv) There is a need for the Civic Society to work with the Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan identifying important assets and preserving our open spaces.

xv) The controlled crossing of the A149 near the Recreation Ground should be achieved in early 2014. The **Trustees Report** was approved.

4. The Treasurer, Anthony Gooch, presented his **financial report** in a 'simple' income and expenditure format. Membership dropped to 188, but includes 35 life members. Brian Holmes has been made an honorary member in recognition of the immense amount of work he has done in organising the talks evenings and the displays in the Heritage Centre.

Membership subscriptions came to £2,214 and visitors at our talks evenings paid £189. Income from the railway exhibition was £819 and the excursion £891. Gift Aid Rebate of £635 contributed to a total income for the year to 30 September 2013 of £5,336.08.

Expenditures include our subscription to Civic Voice of £273 and affiliations of £176. The excursion cost £600, hall hire for the railway exhibition £625 and sponsorship of the Heritage Centre £1,000. Projects, exhibitions and events cost £700 and speakers £235. Catering and hospitality came to £287, so that the total came to £4,799.44.

We therefore have an excess of income over expenditure for the year of £536.

Our assets at 30 September consisted of £1,771.78 in the current account and £7,393.64 on deposit.

A vote of thanks was given to Anthony Gooch for managing the finances and to Susan Boxell for maintaining the membership details.

5. Election of an **Independent Examiner** - Mr Fergus McClellan was proposed and elected.

6. **Election of Officers and Trustees** – Mr Murray explained that all committee members who are also trustees retire at the AGM, but may stand for re-election. At this stage Mr John Maiden took the chair and the following were elected:

Chair - Andrew Murray

Secretary – Vacant - No nominations were received.

Treasurer - John Little

Committee Members: Terry Ashworth, Margi Blunden, Martin Chown, Norma Ham, Ivy Scales, Margaret Robinson and Ann Stevens were elected to serve as Trustees.

Susan and David Boxell were thanked for manning the door and keeping the membership records efficiently on a spreadsheet.

The active helpers, David Jones who looks after the notice board and web-site, Brian Holmes, organiser of the talks and John Maiden pursuit of the sanctity of The Green were thanked for their hard work, together with the 25+ volunteers who man the Heritage Centre.

The need for advisors with professional experience in architecture, planning, finance, heritage and history was emphasised. If you are a teacher or an educationalist, we need your help to enthuse younger people about their heritage and history. If you are a naturalist or a biologist, we need your help with Hunstanton's biodiversity issues.

## 7. Forthcoming projects.

i) There is an urgent need to arrange talks for the Autumn of 2014 and Spring of 2015.

ii) We hope to move the memorial shelter in Chapel Bank to a position near to the lighthouse and at the same time move the 3 other Boulton & Paul shelters on the cliff top away from the cliff edge in conjunction with the Town Council and the Borough Council.

iii) The 7 interpretation boards installed about 4 years ago have not stood up to the weather and have become unreadable. Their information needs to be updated and replaced.

iv) When Oasis Way was constructed in 1970, evidence was uncovered that this was a Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement. That fact needs to be signposted. The Borough Council has offered to place a large piece of Carstone there with an inscribed plaque. We need to produce a leaflet to be available in the Tourist Information Centre and the Heritage Centre.

An invitation was issued for members to come to the next meeting of the committee on Thursday 19 December 2013.

## 8. Any other business

i) Mr John Maiden moved a motion that "Hunstanton Civic Society opposes any further breach of the 1955 Covenant which would occur if the Borough Council agreed retrospectively to the unlawful annexation by O'Quigley's Bar of the part of The Green adjacent to its premises on the west side of Le Strange Terrace." Mr Maiden pointed out that the Borough Council had thwarted two recent attempts to reinforce the 1955 Covenant: firstly by opposing the registration of the whole of The Green as a Town Green; and then by withdrawing an application submitted on behalf of the Town Council for the same land to be protected by Fields in Trust and Queen Elizabeth II Fields.

The proposition was carried without dissent.

ii) Mr Murray requested that the official name of the society be changed to "Hunstanton and District Civic Society". This was agreed and he said he would write to the Charities Commission to request their approval.

9. Finally, Mr Murray proposed a **vote of thanks** to Lisa Powell, town clerk, Angie the Facilities Manager, Kevin, the Caretaker for the use of and setting out the hall. To Martin Chown, Anthony Gooch, Norma Ham and Ann Stevens for the excellent buffet that had been laid out. To the Borough Council for the use of the large meeting room at Valentine Road without charge.

The AGM was closed at 19.10.

After the buffet, it was announced that on Saturday 14 December at 11.00 an oak tree was to be planted by Michael le Strange Meakin assisted by Cllr Elizabeth Watson, the Borough Mayor and Cllr Elaine Clutton, Mayor of Hunstanton in recognition of the fact that the Community Orchard had become a QE II Field in Trust.

It was also announced that the Heritage Centre would be open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays as well as Christmas Day and Boxing Day from 12.30 to 3.30 in December, but it would be closed in January and reopen on Friday 14 February 2014. It could be opened at other times by prior arrangement.

Mr David Robertson, Historic Environment Officer at Norfolk County Council was then introduced and gave his talk on East Anglia during the Anglo Saxon and Viking eras. This was well illustrated and packed with fascinating information about this area of the country.