



CANTERBURY COMMEMORATION SOCIETY

Founded in 1996 to celebrate the history and heritage of Canterbury

Registered charity no. 1057977 www.cantcommsoc.co.uk

Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting

6.45 pm on Tuesday 2 July 2024

At St Peter's Anglican Church, Canterbury

Present:

24 members of the Society attended. The meeting was quorate.

1. Chair of the meeting

Pursuant to clause 6(3) of the Constitution of the Society, the members appointed Stewart Ross to chair the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Gillian Rushton, Charlotte Cornell, Connie Nolan, Nicola Waddington.

3. Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting held on 4 July 2023 were approved. There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

➤ Stewart Ross presented his report on the past year's activities of the Society.

➤ He said:

"The Society has seen considerable progress with the projects it has undertaken. Thanks to the diligence and painstaking labours of Christopher Palmer, the Model of Whitstable Harbour in 1923 was completed and handed over to the Harbour Board in a fine ceremony, attended by many local dignitaries, on 23 February 2024.

The statue of Aphra Behn has been finished and cast in bronze. She is now paid for and in storage near Canterbury as the Council prepares foundations in front of the Beaney House of Art and Knowledge. A bronze plaque giving information on Aphra's life and work, and the names of major donors is being prepared. We are delighted and honoured to learn that a person of considerable national standing is free to officiate in the unveiling and handing over of the statue to the Council on 27 February 2025.

Meanwhile, thanks to the generosity of Paul Abbott and Paul Roberts, we raised sufficient funds for the celebrated artist Jason de Caires Taylor to raise and repair the Alluvia statues in the river Stour. However, when taken out of the water, the figures were found to be beyond repair. To our delight, Jason has agreed to replace them with a new, single LED-lit figure. Installation will be in September.

Thanks to an inspiring speech by a sixth form student, the plan for a memorial to all Tudor martyrs has been widened to cover all those who were killed for their faith over the centuries, including the medieval Jewish community. Working with the City Council, a site for the memorial has been found inside the grounds of the castle.

A small team headed by our secretary has undertaken to renew the information board about Alderman Simmons, a key figure in the City's history, at St Mildred's Church.

Our work with the Canterbury Society has resulted in the placement of a dozen new blue plaques commemorating key figures from the City's past. The Society will supervise the placement of the next tranche of blue plaques. We have also taken a keen interest in the Canterbury's Tales of England project and the City Council's espousal of many of its features in its Levelling Up through tourism and heritage programme.

The Society has exciting plans for future projects, including a striking Wine Roundabout at the heart of the city, memorial plaques on the exterior wall of St Augustine's Abbey, a heritage volume of Canterbury writers, and support for events commemorating the bicentenary of the opening of the Crab and Winkle Line in 1830.

Our many other activities have included a series of readings of the plays of Aphra Behn and other local playwrights, social fundraising events, and open talks on significant local topics. These included Joseph Conrad, Councillor Simmons, and an inaugural Michael Steed Memorial Lecture by Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok on the Jews of Canterbury.

The Society's key personnel have remained unchanged, though there has been some churn among the trustees occasioned by volunteers realising that membership of our committee involved more than they had realised.

The wider membership has remained steady at around 100 and the number of corporate sponsors has grown.

Following the death of our Honorary President, Michael Steed, we are delighted to report that Paul Roberts, a prominent local businessman and benefactor, has agreed to take up the role. We are equally delighted to report that George Metcalf, a former Lord Mayor, has agreed to join the ranks of our Honorary Vice-Presidents.

In summary, during the period 2023-24, the Society has been as active as ever in meeting the aims and purposes outlined in its constitution and remains deeply grateful to all who have supported it in one way or another over the past year".

- The report was accepted, with warm thanks to Stewart for his enthusiastic and never-flagging leadership of the Society.

5. Report and Accounts for the year ended 28 February 2024

- Alan Turner presented the report and accounts.
- He said that the year had been very successful. The Society had approximately £40,000 available to complete existing projects.

- The report and accounts were agreed. The Secretary will arrange the uploading of the accounts to the website and will make the annual return to the Charity Commission.

6. Election of President

- Paul Roberts, the prominent local businessman, who is very committed to the heritage of the city, active in the Crab and Winkle Trust, and whose company is the new sponsor of the Canterbury Festival, was elected the Honorary President of the Society for the coming year.

7. Vice-Presidents

- The meeting noted that Jenny Uglow and Professor Elaine Hobby had previously been appointed Vice-Presidents.¹
- The meeting appointed George Metcalfe, a prominent local citizen, as an additional Vice-President.

8. Election of Officers and members of the Executive Committee

The following elections took place:

- Chair: Stewart Ross
- Vice-Chair: Charlotte Cornell
- Treasurer: Alan Turner
- Secretary: Brian McHenry
- Members of the Executive Committee: Andrew Webster, Carolyn Oulton, Hilary Brian, Connie Nolan, Gillian Rushton and Nicola Waddington.²

9. Trustee Benefit Clause

- Brian McHenry proposed the following amendments to the Society's constitution:
 - (i) For the heading of clause 12 there shall be substituted "Trustee Benefit Clause".
 - (ii) For clause 12 there shall be substituted:

"Nothing in this governing document shall prohibit payments made to trustees and/or connected persons for services and/or goods provided to the Charity in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 (as amended)."³

- (ii) In clause 19(1) for "clause 12 (Executive Committee members not to be personally interested" there shall be substituted "clause 12 (Trustee Benefit Clause)".

Brian explained that the constitution did not permit the payment for services which the Society's trustees provided to the Society. In the case of the Whitstable Harbour

¹ The Society's constitution does not specify a term of office for the Vice-Presidents. Clause 9(1): "Each annual meeting shall elect an honorary president and may from time to time also appoint one or more honorary vice-presidents".

² The constitution provides for up to and including eight persons to be elected as trustees at the AGM, in addition to the four officers, see clause 10(1).

³ This amendment has the consent of the Charity Commission.

Project, it transpired that Christopher Palmer, a trustee, was the only suitable person to take on the project management role and bring it to a satisfactory conclusion. Because of the Society's constitution, Christopher had to resign as a trustee to take on the role of project manager.

The law now permitted a charity in specified circumstances to pay trustees, provided that the Charity Commission had given its agreement to an amendment to the charity's constitution. Given the history of the Whitstable Harbour Project, the Society's trustees decided that it was prudent to seek the Charity Commission's consent to a suitable amendment. It was important to note that the Society had no current intention to pay trustees for any work done for the Society, nor did it envisage any forthcoming projects when this might be necessary. The Charity Commission had given its consent to an amendment to the constitution. Following a short discussion, the AGM agreed Nem. Con. to the amendment.

10. AOB

There was no further business.

The AGM concluded at 7.25 pm.