

# The John Hampden Society

## Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on 28th February 2016 at Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Shillingford

<p><b>Present:</b> Steve Barriff (Chairman), Sam Hearn (Treasurer and Membership Secretary) Anthea Coles (Hon. Secretary) Roy Bailey and Gerald McGregor.</p>	
<p><b>1. Apologies:</b> None</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of Last Meeting:</b> These were accepted as a true record of the meeting, with slight amendments to the short version for publication on the website.</p>	Anthea
<p><b>Matters Arising:</b> There were no matters arising that will not be discussed later in the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>3. Derek Lester - return of the Library:</b> Derek is being pursued by the Society for reimbursement of the costs involved in taking legal action to recover the library and Roy asked Sam how much this amounted to. Sam reported that the total costs amounted to £2,526.40 and our Solicitor had written to Derek, giving him fourteen days to pay.</p>	
<p>In view of the fact that members would be within their rights to ask to see a copy of the full minutes of our meetings, Gerald asked that, in regard to the Minutes of the November meeting, they should be annotated "Confidential and Without Prejudice", and it was suggested that some of the wording should be amended.</p>	Anthea
<p><b>4. Membership Matters:</b> Steve asked Gerald if he had managed to make any progress with involving MPs in the Society. Gerald confirmed that he had spoken to the Speaker's Office, outlining what we were thinking about, and he was advised that it would be best to leave this until after the referendum, once all the turmoil has quietened down, so this is in abeyance for the time being. Gerald has got the details of the new intake and asked for confirmation as to whether we should concentrate on English MPs or include Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish. Roy confirmed that we had agreed to include all MPs. Gerald then asked whether the committee were happy for the suggested letter to be sent by e-mail to them at the House of Commons, rather than printing off a lot of copies to post. Roy felt that the only problem with this was that, if printed, they would be on our letterhead, whereas an e-mail would not have that. Anthea suggested putting the letter on headed paper, saving as a PDF and including it as an attachment to an e-mail to each MP. Roy said that he would send Gerald the appropriate letterhead to use for this.</p>	Gerald Roy
<p>With regard to Cambridge University, Gerald had made further enquiries about who is actually studying or doing Masters in our area of history, and it appears that there is no central registry, which means contacting each college individually to ask that question, which he is happy to do provided the committee are happy to wait a while for him to do, as he feels that if we get a parliamentary section and an academic section, it will make a lot of mileage for the Society. Looking at Local Authority Education Departments he will ask if their own secondary schools have a local history society or association, and if so, could we ask them if they would like to become members of the Society. Gerald said that they have an e-officer on Hounslow Council who is very keen and he would like to find out through him whether the local secondary schools have a local history group and if so he will invite them to become members of the John Hampden Society. He mentioned that there is just one exam board that does history at A level for that period and it would be good to get them on board. The committee unanimously agreed that, as Gerald was happy to put the work into this project, we were all in agreement.</p>	Gerald
<p>Sam mentioned that Clare College is doing a symposium some time this year, on Little Gidding, and it would be good if he and Gerald could find out more about this and possibly attend.</p>	Sam & Gerald
<p>Sam reported that he had not really been on top of the membership issues this year. Roy confirmed that it was down to the membership secretary to keep the membership list up to date and notify the webmaster of changes to be uploaded to the website. When the new website is up and running, updating the membership list will be something that the membership secretary can do as we will all, in theory, be able to update our own sections. In the meantime Roy said that he would let Sam have a Word document copy of the latest list. Anthea also needed this in order to produce labels for the latest newsletter and AGM paperwork. Roy's policy is to update the list every month.</p>	Roy
<p><b>5. Executive Committee Issues:</b> a) There is the old problem of getting new Trustees to help with the running of the Society, as at present there are too few people trying to do too much work. This will especially be the case when Roy retires at the</p>	

coming AGM as we will then be down to four trustees unless any nominations are received from the membership. It was felt that there might be some way in which we could involve overseas members on an international basis, as not all posts required that the holder should be local or even living in the same country. With modern communications, especially Skype, we could include overseas or out of area members in the appropriate parts of the meeting. It was confirmed that there is nothing in our Constitution to prevent us having an overseas trustee, but Sam was not certain whether there would be a problem with the Charities Commission. It was felt that it would not be feasible for the Treasurer to live abroad unless there was a deputy treasurer in this country, but it would be possible for the newsletter editor to live overseas. Gerald felt that we could ask whether members had been with the Society for more than five years, in which case would they be prepared to help the Society as with their experience they could be very useful to the Society's aims and ambitions. Roy felt that we need the Kitchener photo on the front page of the next *Patriot* - saying 'Your Society Needs You!'. Anthea suggested a photo of the Aylesbury Statue instead of the Kitchener photo.

Gerald wondered whether we could have some commemorative mugs made and Roy commented that, apart from the badges, we had never gone into the production of merchandise, such as ties, etc. but we have too small a membership to really make this viable.

- b) Roy suggested that he should send something out on the Googlegroup mailing list to members, informing them of the date and venue of the AGM and letting them know that we would be looking for volunteers to join the committee. This was agreed, but Sam felt that we would still need to use the individual approach to stand much chance of finding new trustees. Anthea reported that she had tried to contact Beth Rogers on this point, but had no success. Unfortunately there are a number of members who are happy to be members but are busy and do not have the time to take on any roles. We should also make it clear that friends and family would be welcome to attend the AGM.

Sam will let Anthea have a copy of the tea menu for Broughton so that she can compile a booking form to send out with the paperwork.

We will be holding the meeting in the tea room at the Castle, which, if the weather is cold, will be more comfortable than in the Great Hall, as there is no heating there, though Roy felt disappointed that we were unable to hold it in the Hall. Sam also reported that there will be a charge made to tour the Castle, which he thought would be about £7 per person.

Gerald offered to do Part 2 of his talk on London in the Civil War, if no other speaker could be found.

Roy suggested that Sam might have a word with Joanna, who organises the events at Broughton and point out that we have very close ties with Broughton and that Lord Saye & Sele is one of our Vice Presidents, to see if it is possible to reduce the cost of the tour of the Castle. Sam felt it unlikely that they would make a concession as we are unlikely to have 30 attendees wishing to see the house, which is the minimum for a concessionary rate.

#### **6. The Patriot:**

Roy commented that this has been considerably delayed and he wondered whether Anthea might find it better to send out *The Patriot* with the AGM paperwork to save postage. Roy had started putting the newsletter together before Christmas but was waiting for contributions to come in, and in order to make sure that he had enough to fill the publication, he had to put it together himself before sending the items to Sarsen. Sarsen sent him their version and Roy was horrified with some of the mistakes, especially the spelling mistakes they had made, so he sent them a long e-mail with details of the amendments that were required, plus some more material to be included, and had heard nothing back from them, but anticipated hearing from them the following day, and if he is satisfied, he will tell them to go ahead, but it will then be another week before Anthea gets the results, so it would be best to send it all out together, provided the newsletter is ready in time so that the paperwork meets the deadline of 21 days prior to the meeting.

The publication of the newsletter after Roy's resignation was discussed. Roy talked about other alternatives, but did not feel that Word was really designed for this type of use. Sam mentioned Mailchimp, which seems to be quite widely used, and it was felt that we could look into this, as it promised to be somewhat easier than Publisher to use. Apparently Battlefield Trust use Mailchimp, as do several other organisations. Sam said that you choose your format and then it is a matter of cutting and pasting. Roy conceded that it was inevitable that the style of things will have to change over time. Gerald felt that we should leave the design as it is for at least a year before we start making changes but Sam stated that we cannot leave it as it is because we have no-one to take the task on of producing the newsletter in its present form. It was agreed that it is an advantage to have an independent proof reader. Sam is prepared to have a go at Mailchimp in due course and Anthea said she would have a look at this, but was unable to put a lot of time into the production of the newsletter. We will need Roy to provide the headings, etc, so that we can

Roy

Sam  
Anthea

Gerald

Sam

Anthea

Sam  
Anthea

continue the same format. Roy stated that he will not be leaving us in the lurch and suggested that he remained on the committee mailing list and came along to the first committee meeting after the AGM. He will then gradually fade away.

### **7. Financial Report:**

Sam produced the up-to-date accounts and told the committee that we still have £4,500 in the bank, and will be getting back the costs of the legal action against Derek in due course. The accounts included the costs of the new website. About £37 worth of books have been sold. We assume that the Bucks Family History Society will continue to sell our books for us via their website. Gerald spotted a slight error, which Sam was aware of and will correct before the accounts are produced for the AGM. The Chairman's Report will also be included with the accounts. One point that may be picked up is that members subscriptions are significantly down, and it looks as though we have lost membership, though we have had a few new members join recently. The other point Sam made was that Paul Hooper on the Isle of Wight had failed to cancel his standing order and had overpaid, so we owe him some money and Sam will sort this out.

Sam

### **8. Website:**

Roy said that he had not heard anything from Sarah recently regarding the website, but he felt there were a couple of problems because some time ago she had e-mailed him asking whether he had uploaded a lot more stuff because our website seemed to be full. Roy had not done anything but suggested that she get in touch with the company. What had happened was that Compila, had been taken over by someone else who was then taken over by someone else, which had caused certain problems. Sarah contacted them and got back to Roy to report that she had sorted it out - they were moving us to a new server. When Roy was loading the last lot of committee minutes, they uploaded ok but when he went to the Members' Page, they did not appear, so he got on to Sarah and it eventually turned out that they had not given Roy the actual address of the server. Once Roy was given that, there was no problem.

Sarah liked what Roy had done with the books we sell, and suggested we do that with our library, though it would be a major job photographing the covers of them all. Sam will therefore get back to her to say that we will not do this at present, but will publish the list that we have already published. Once Sarah has copied everything from the old website to the new one, another meeting will be arranged with her. Sam will liaise with her on this and copy Steve in. Sam felt we ought to give her some descriptions for the photos that scroll across. Roy had suggested that, instead of the rectangular photos we needed a line of square ones per page. It would have been nice if, before the AGM, we had been in a position to e-mail members suggesting that they look at the new website to see what they thought. He would prefer to have the criticisms now rather than when the new website has gone live. Anthea suggested it was a good idea, as we want members to be more involved with the Society, to let them see what we have done so far and give us their views. This might possibly lead to someone offering to take over as webmaster. Roy was sure that once it is up and running and has settled down, anyone on the committee should be able to manage it but Sam felt we would need someone to overview it.

Website  
Sub-Committee

### **9. Location of 2016 Wreath Laying:**

We are hoping to have two wreath laying ceremonies this year. One at Westminster and the other at the Ship Money memorial. We will probably recycle the wreath that was laid at Westminster last year. Jim Rodda is organising the Ship Money Memorial ceremony commencing with lunch at The Hampden Arms, and then travelling by car to a specific parking place, and walking up Honor End Lane to the memorial. This will take place on 12th June. It was felt that, if this became an annual event, it might attract more interest than the ceremony at Chalgrove did. Roy will publicise this in the Diary Dates for the next edition of the newsletter.

Sam will contact the Speaker's Office to ask whether we can lay a wreath again this year, asking when would be convenient to them, hoping that it could be later in the day than last year, possibly the 24th, and Roy will include this in Diary Dates also, marking it 'to be confirmed'. We might even get some junior Doctors there to support us! It was also suggested that, as the outcome of the Referendum is likely to be announced on the 24th, we might even get on TV.

Sam

### **10. Future Events:**

Talks - Roy commented that we have at least four people who can do talks, Gerald, Miles, Sam and himself, but we had no talks to do. He wondered about contacting Historical Societies, U3As, etc. who might be interested. Anthea pointed out that, if he looked back through the minutes, he would see that all the people who were doing talks were asked to let her have a list of the people they had given talks to and she was going to write to them, but as they had failed to do that, she had failed to write to them. Gerald said that, when approaching schools and history societies, he will inform them that we have speakers who would be happy to go along and give them a talk. What we need is an index of all the organisations that we have done talks for together with the contact information. Anthea agreed that if she knows the name of the organisation, she can probably find out the contact details. Roy suggested that she did a search of local History Societies and U3As and she will do this as soon as she has time. Sam suggested that we need a short explanation of what we can do, to send out to organisations. It was agreed that a 40 minute talk was a good length.

All  
speakers

Anthea

Sam had been talking to Simon Marsh of The Battlefields Trust, who had been having problems with Derek and had found him very difficult to work with. Now that Derek's work is published, Battlefields Trust want to put a series of afternoon talks together on Hampden's Battles, and he has suggested the Bucks County Museum in Aylesbury as a venue, probably one talk a month. Simon asked Sam to sound out the Committee and see what we thought of this idea, Sam had said that we would be happy to invite the membership along and we would probably be paying the fee for the room, which we have the funds to do. We could then go along with our leaflets etc, and if it was in Aylesbury it would probably attract interest.

**11. Any Items not on Agenda:**

Sam had e-mailed Adrian Tinniswood but received no reply..

There was a short discussion concerning the refurbishment of the display boards and the production of more display banners. Sam felt that we needed two or three more of the expanding banners, one telling about the Society, and another one or two with material from the display boards. Sam was hoping that his daughter would assist with the design of the banners.

The future of the Society was briefly discussed and it was suggested that we give it another year to see if the situation improves with regard to membership and support for the committee. If things do not change, then thought will need to be given to what we do next. We need to let the members know that we need more help and support from them, but should not threaten that the Society will go to the wall if this is not forthcoming. Even if the Society is wound up we can still keep the website and the Facebook page going (Roy reminded all committee members with Facebook accounts that they should 'Like' the Society). In the short term we need a membership secretary and someone to oversee the production of *The Patriot*. Roy stated that the problem with collecting a load of articles and just sending them to Sarsen is not going to work too well, because Sarsen really do not know how we want the newsletter set up, etc. Also whoever sends Sarsen the articles will not be sure whether there is enough to fill the newsletter or too many, in which case they will not know what to leave out, so it means that someone has to set it all up anyway to see how it will all fit together.

Sam suggested that we might tell members that the committee are elected annually for a three-year term and that existing committee members will only commit to serving for another three years, if re-elected annually in accordance with the Constitution, and will need to stand down and be replaced at the end of that period. Roy pointed out that the webmaster and editor of the newsletter do not need to be committee members.

Gerald proposed a vote of thanks to Roy for all the work he has done over the years, with which the committee concurred. He said it was wonderful that he had got us so far and his work was much appreciated.

Sam felt that, if the Society did end, we had still done a lot to promote the name of John Hampden. We are the fourth reference when Googling John Hampden and on Wikipedia we are the first mentioned and it is obviously worth keeping the Society going if at all possible.

**12. Date and Venue of next meeting:**

The date for this meeting was agreed as 26th June, 2016 at the same venue, commencing at 2.00.

Sam/  
Roy