**THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY**

**Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held on 16th May 2021 via Zoom.**

**Present:**

Mr Roy Bailey (Chairman), Mrs. Anthea Coles *(Hon. Secretary),* Mr. Sam. Hearn, (*Treasurer)* & Mr. Philip Broomfield *(Membership Secretary*), Mr Peter Osborne, Beth Rogers and 7 members of the Society including Pat Claus and Gordon Schreck from America.

**1. Introduction by the Chairman:**

Roy Bailey opened the proceedings by first of all welcoming all attendees to the first AGM for two years and the first time it has been held on-line.

**2. Apologies for absence:**

Apologies had been received from Lady Helen Motteux, Brian Cox and Jim Rodda. Apologies were also later received from Charles Harvey and Simon Marsh.

**3. The Minutes of the previous AGM:**

These were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

**4. Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**5. Reports from Officers:**

**Chairman's Report:**

**The Chairman’s Annual Report – 2020 (and 2019)**

**General**

The aims and objectives of the Society are set out in the Society’s constitution which is accessible to members on the website. In planning the Society’s activities for the year, the Trustees kept in mind the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit.

**Accounts**

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure proper accounting records are maintained that are able, with reasonable accuracy, to provide the financial position and statements of the charitable company in compliance with the 1993 Charities Act and 1985 Companies Act. The Trustees are also responsible for the safe keeping of all of the Society’s assets and for taking all reasonable steps to detect and prevent any fraudulent or other irregular activities.

**Funds**

The Society currently held no restricted funds at the year end. All the Society’s funds can therefore be used to further any of the Society’s aims and objectives. The funds donated by members to enable the Society to specifically acquire the Hampden Locket were all expended in the year.

**Trustees**

In addition to their financial responsibilities the trustees are also collectively responsible for the policies, strategy and management of the Society. The trustees are appointed annually at the AGM from within the membership. There is provision in the constitution for the trustees to co-opt additional trustees during the year and one new trustee was appointed in this way in 2020 and another in 2021.

**Membership**

The total number of members at the end of the year was 85 compared with 90 at the end of 2019. This is a decrease in membership of 6% in the year.

**Public Benefit**

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance and confirm that its activities provide a public benefit and are aligned to its objects (as stated in its governing documents) for the preservation, interpretation and presentation of battlefield sites as educational and heritage resources.

The Trust readily co-operates with other organizations with shared concerns and interests so that through collaborative working, resources and effort can be pooled and used to maximum effect.

**Activities**

To call this the Chairman’s Annual Report would be misleading, as the coronavirus pandemic prevented us from holding an Annual General Meeting in 2020, so there are 2 years of the Society’s activities to report, and I will be as brief as possible.

The 2019 AGM was held in the splendid surroundings of Hartwell House Hotel, where members enjoyed an excellent lunch in the former Hampden ancestral home, followed by a fascinating talk by member Bruce Alexander, who drew on his career as an actor to suggest that John Hampden would have attended the theatre. One longstanding member later said that it was, ‘one of the best AGMs I can remember’.

We were back in Aylesbury in July for another enthralling talk; this time by Professor Ian Beckett, whose subject was *A Military Historian’s Civil War*. Held at the Bucks County Museum, this event was not as well attended as we had hoped, but the whole of Professor Beckett’s presentation is preserved on the Society’s website.

In September 2019 Homes England, a non-departmental government body which funds affordable new housing in England, announced that they had purchased two areas of land next to Chalgrove Airfield, with a view to residential development. This would have an adverse effect on the 1643 battlefield site. Last year the planning application was published and, along with dozens of other organizations and private individuals, the Society made known its views. Formal approval to include the scheme in the Local Plan has been given, but there the matter rests.

With the retirement of John Bercow as Speaker of the House of Commons, the Society asked the new Speaker, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, to replace him as a Vice-President; an invitation Sir Lindsay gracefully accepted.

The Society’s plans for 2020 included the AGM and lunch at *The King’s Head*, Aylesbury; participation in the Thame History Fair in June; Executive Committee meetings; and talks to interested organizations. All these had to be cancelled, and the Committee adopted the video-conferencing program Zoom in order to conduct their meetings and to keep in touch with the membership. Not only did this have the immediate advantage of saving time and money on travel to a suitable venue, but our Membership Secretary, Phil Broomfield, who lives in Bournemouth and hitherto participated via Skype, was no longer at the mercy of intermittent Wi-Fi connections.

Other casualties of lockdown were the proposal to erect a plaque in Great Hampden church to mark John Hampden’s burial place; staging of a play about Ship Money being written by member Jim Rodda; and my personal wish to hold this year’s AGM in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight.

On the plus side, we were able to hold two members’ meetings on Zoom, with participation from some of our members in the USA, and this has proved to be valuable experience for holding this AGM in the same way. It is proposed that, even when we can hold conventional AGMs in the future, the meeting will be equipped with a computer and big screen so that far-flung members can take part.

In May 2020 we were advised that a locket allegedly containing a piece of John Hampden’s hair was coming up for auction. Thanks to the efforts of member Peter Osborne, who runs an art gallery, we were able to acquire the artefact for £396, most of which was met by members’ donations. Included in the lot were two mystery portraits and the typescript of John Drinkwater’s book *John Hampden’s England*, plus a part of his play about Oliver Cromwell. Having extracted all possible information from these documents, they were donated to the Friends of the Dymock Poets (of which Drinkwater was a member) for lodging in the University of Gloucestershire Museum. The locket is destined for a local museum.

Together with Jim Rodda, Peter Osborne has been negotiating with the Chiltern Society, who are the custodians of the site, to improve the visibility of the Ship Money monument at Prestwood. Work on reducing the hedge height has taken place, and plans include improving the legibility of the monument’s engraved inscription and installing a weatherproof box to hold John Hampden Society leaflets.

The requirements of the 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) made it necessary for the Society to obtain members’ approval for compiling and publishing a shared membership list. This task was undertaken by Beth Rogers, and she successfully completed this within a few weeks.

During 2019 it was decided to donate copies of John Adair’s biography of John Hampden to libraries around the country, and several went out containing bookplates indicating the Society’s involvement. At one of the recent online members’ meetings, Gordon Schreck from the USA asked if a copy could be purchased by Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, as they only had one. The Society dispatched a pack of 5 as a gift, which was gratefully received.

Throughout the past 2 years the Society’s newsletter, ***The Patriot***, has continued to be published, and always contains plenty of news, articles, book reviews, etc. Contributions are always welcome. Most members receive and read this electronically, but we have a few who like to have paper copies by post. For the past 10 years these have been printed by Sarsen Press of Winchester, and the Society is grateful to proprietor Tony Hill, who has had to continue single-handed since the first lockdown, and still provides a quick and high-quality service.

The Society’s website continues to provide an essential facility for hosting the diary of events, copies of ***The Patriot*** and much archive material. The Webmaster welcomes suggestions for what to include on the website.

Peter Osborne and Beth Rogers have both been co-opted onto the Executive Committee in the past few months and are proving to be a valuable addition to the team. They have both indicated their intention to stand for election at this AGM, and I commend them to the membership.

As I promised before, I shall be standing down from the post of Chairman and membership of the committee this year. I have been involved with helping to run the Society since its foundation in October 1992 but decided to retire at the 2016 AGM. However, subsequent events – lack of candidates for the committee and a general air of defeatism – made me decide to stand as Chairman in 2018 to try to stem the decline.

I gave myself 3 years and I hope I have succeeded to some extent. If so, it is thanks to the excellent support of Hon. Secretary Anthea Coles, Hon. Treasurer and Webmaster Sam Hearn, Membership Secretary Phil Broomfield, and Peter and Beth. Our Patron, Miles Buckinghamshire, is always there to give us wise advice and encouragement.

Despite a shortage of active members, I believe the Society is in much better shape than it was in 2017, and I am optimistic about its future.

**Roy Bailey – Chairman**

**The Treasurer's Report:**

The John Hampden Society – Financial Report for calendar year 2020

Another financially successful year for the Society financially. We generated a surplus of £453 and ended the

year with £7,408 in the bank. The lockdowns have had an impact on the Society’s activities and

reduced both its income and expenditure.

However due to the efforts of the membership secretary the subscriptions collected remained

remarkably stable at £937 (2020) as opposed to £959 (2019). A gift-aid claim was not submitted in the year, but this will be done retrospectively. Income from talks and book sales were reduced because of the lockdown.

Members generously contributed £370 so that the Hampden Locket could be purchased at auction.

The final cost of £397 will be more than covered when the associated gift-aid has been claimed.

Expenditure in the year was much reduced largely because of the lockdown. The increase in website

expenses reflects the catching-up on some necessary expenditure that our service supplier had neglected to bill the Society for.

A gift-aid claim for calendar year 2018 was submitted to HMRC after the year end and £235.21 was received by the Society on 30th April.

Roy proposed a vote of thanks to Sam for a job well done. Adopted of the Accounts was proposed by Annabel Bailey and seconded by Beth Rogers.

**The Membership Secretary's Report:**

Prepared by Phil Broomfield

Current membership stood at 81 as opposed to 85 in 2019.There were 17 renewal reminders sent out in January and 12 of those renewed, but three were chased four or five times before being abandoned. We have recently had a new member join bringing the new members to three in the last year, so not as many as in previous years, but we are currently working on getting the message out and Peter has mentioned one or two groups locally who should be approached and hopefully we may pick up some new members that way. The pandemic has impacted our canvassing as we have been unable to do talks and hold events, but we have really coped very well despite the current situation. It is just a pity that the numbers are going down rather than up.

**The Web-master's Report:**

There have been no major changes to the website in the year. Technical maintenance and regular

updating of entries has continued. For example, following meetings of the Executive minutes are posted in the members’ section. A thorough review of all electronic documents including back copies of The Patriot Newsletter has been carried out to ensure that when an old Patriot is viewed on screen and closed the viewer will not be automatically thrown out of the website.

Additional amendments have been made to ensure compliance with the GDPR legislation.

We continue to add documents and briefing notes to the archive section for example The Bucks Garden Trust report on the park and gardens of Hampden House, and a transcription of John Drinkwater’s notes on his book John Hampden’s English that was acquired with the locket.

The Diary of Events section of the opening page has been renamed the News and Events Diary.

There has been a sustained effort to regularly refresh this section to make it more attractive for

members to revisit the website.

We now receive monthly Google Analytic reports of the activity on our website. More work needs to be done on this before I would feel confident to report on this to members. In April 2021 we had 456 ‘users’ logging on to the site of whom 393 were identified as new. 18% were returning users. Of the 456, 44% were American users and 26% were British. The most visited part of the website were the newsletters.

**6. Election of officers and committee members:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  | **Votes including postal votes:** | |
| **Position** | **Nominee** | **Proposer** | **Seconder** | **For** | **Against** |
| **Chairman** | Beth Rogers | Roy Bailey | Anthea Coles | 13 | 0 |
| **Hon Secretary** | Anthea Coles | Sam Hearn | Roy Bailey | 13 | 0 |
| **Hon Treasurer** | Sam Hearn | Anthea Coles | Phil Broomfield | 13 | 0 |
| **Membership Secretary** | Phil Broomfield | Roy Bailey | Anthea Coles | 13 | 0 |
| **Committee Member** | Peter Osborne | Sam Hearn | Roy Bailey | 13 | 0 |

There being no other nominations, the above-named officers were duly elected to the Executive Committee for the coming year.

**7. Programme of Events and Plans for future Activities:**

We have a couple of talks planned for this year. Sam is giving a talk to the Abingdon U3A in June and Roy is giving a talk to a group at the National Liberal Club in London in August. This is all that we have planned at the moment, but with the relaxing of some of the pandemic regulations we should be able to meet more people and if the regulations are relaxed again in June we should be able to think about organizing some sort of event so suggestions would be welcome. It may be possible to have a lunch, possibly with a speaker. Peter had some interesting suggestions, and we are just waiting for the Government to confirm relaxation of the regulations to put them into effect, He stated that Amersham Museum would host an event for about 50 people around the locket, with refreshments, once lockdown is over. He thinks that the Friends of the Amersham Museum could be very fertile ground for the Society and bring in new members. Roy suggested that it might be possible to set up some sort of streaming link so that overseas members could be involved as well.

Miles stated that he has not given any talks recently.

Sam spoke about a virtual talk he was giving on 7th June, which members were invited to join if they wished, concerning the plague in Great Hampden.

Peter also mentioned The Griffin Club in Amersham of which he is a member and is booked to give a talk next year, the subject of which will be John Hampden. Also, Chesham and Amersham Conservative Association have monthly meetings and he has spoken to them twice. They are always looking for speakers and would be happy to hear from anyone who wished to volunteer.

It was hoped that, at some point Roy’s idea of an AGM at Carisbrooke Castle might come to fruition. This came to nothing despite the fact that John Hobart was doing his best to assist with the arrangements, because of the pandemic, but might be possible once things get back to normal. Kate said that they would be very happy to meet up with any members who wished to visit Carisbrooke Castle on an informal visit.

**8. The Patriot:**

Roy has stood down from the Committee but would like to continue to produce ***The Patriot***, having done so since the Society started. Sam has proposed that as we come up to Edition 100, either later this year or early next year, we should make it a rather special one. Roy pointed out that although we are currently up to Edition 97, we have actually produced more than 100 because there have been one or two unnumbered issues and some emergency productions, but all editions are available to be viewed on the website now. He asked if anyone had any comments on the newsletter, he would like to hear them now. Peter Osborne commented that it is a good publication, but it is underused, and we need to think how we can get them in front of a wider audience. He suggested maybe printing them and sending them out to schools. Roy will take a supply of newsletters and books to his talk in London in August. Roy commented that we have a very good printer in Winchester, who has carried on manfully o his own during lockdown. Beth agreed about the quality of the content of the newsletter and during the GDPR catch-up, when talking to members on the phone she found it was critical and she felt that they think that is what they are paying their money for as many of them cannot get to meetings, but they do enjoy ***The Patriot*** and the historical interest of it. Roy said that because it is on-line and many members read it there, we only produce about 25 or 50 copies to be sent out to those members without on-line access, but we could certainly afford to print more as and when needed, so there is no problem there which could be sent to schools or libraries if we could find libraries to take a regular supply.

Miles asked Gordon Schreck whether he knew if Hampden-Sydney College received copies of ***The Patriot***. Gordon was not certain but said he would enquire. He is in contact with the Herdegans, who are members of the Society and receive the newsletter. They had spoken about the newsletter and had hoped to make it available through the College library to the students and faculty, but whether that had been done by him Gordon did not know. Gordon said it would be difficult for him to do it on his own though he feels that the faculty of the college should be more involved, and he will follow this up with Dr Herdegan. Roy pointed out that there are two ways of doing this. ***The Patriot*** is available on-line and it is possible to download it and print it out. The difference is that the on-line version is done on A4 paper as separate sheets whereas the printed version is done on A3, with two pages on one side and two pages on the other, so it is designed to be folded to make a 4-page A4 leaflet and if the Hampden-Sydney College wanted to print out the folded A4 newsletter, we would have to send them the same format A£ file as is sent to the printer in Winchester, or they could print out separate A4 sheets . Alternatively, we could, of course, print extra copies and Anthea could post them out to the College. Gordon said that when he speaks to Dr. Herdegan, he would ask him to speak to the librarian and as what method they would prefer. Roy said he would email to Gordon the two A3 files for the last issue so that the College could experiment and see what they thought.

**9. The Website:**

Sam also handles the website and told the meeting that he is able to update this as necessary and make changes. There have been no major changes recently but there has been ongoing maintenance and updated, for example when we have an Executive Committee meeting, the Minutes are loaded onto the Members Section of the website so that members can see what has been discussed. Also, the accounts are posted on the website. Members need a password to access this part of the website which is easily obtained by logging into the website and requesting access to the Members Section. So far as we can make out, very few members have actually done so, and Roy feels that this is something that should be pushed because it is a very useful facility.

Sam pointed out that we have uploaded all back issues of the newsletter and there had been a problem whereby when some members accessed copies of the newsletter and then went to close them, they actually logged themselves out of the website. Hopefully this has now been fixed, but there is a bit more work to do. We have also had to make some changes in order to be compliant with GDPR. Documents continue to be added to the archive section, and we are continually adding to that so might attract more hits as there is a lot of items of interest there. The Diary of Events section has now been renamed The News and Events Diary to enable it to be used a bit more productively. There has been a sustained effort to regularly refresh this section to make it more attractive to encourage members to re-visit the website, so if anyone has any news that they think might interest people, they should let Sam know and he will put it up on the front page so that it will help keep the interest going.

Sam confessed that we now receive monthly analytical reports on activity on the website, but we need to do a lot more work before we understand what this information is telling us. Sam thinks he can say that, for instance, in April 2021, we had 456 users of whom 393 were identified as new. Of that total, 44% were American, 26% were British and the other nationalities seem to be mainly spread out across continental Europe. The most visited part of the website in April was the Newsletters, but other sections do get hits. There is a lot of help on the internet and what we do need to be doing in future is to be understanding more about who is reading/downloading the newsletter – is it just members, or other people and also the conversion rate to membership through the website – whether that is working or not. there is a lot more that we can get out of Google Analytics, but it takes time, and it has not been his area of expertise, but as with so many facets of the John Hampden Society, you learn by doing.

Kate Hobart wondered whether using Facebook, Instagram, etc., particularly on public settings, might make it more accessible. Roy replied that he tries to keep the Facebook page updated, including the notice of the AGM, although it is only open to members. He also posts when the new edition of The Patriot is produced. Peter has pointed out that Facebook owns Instagram, and he believes that the Society should have an Instagram account, which is something for the Committee to discuss in the future. Kate is quite a new Instagram user, but she has noticed that it seems very much more accessible to the public. Peter said that in his business they have moved quite a lot of business from email to Facebook and Instagram because you can spread the word more effectively and by including in posts links to other organizations, the information is automatically forwarded to them, spreading the word very effectively. It is a very good method of reaching a wider audience very quickly. Peter also commented the MailChimp analytics are more effective than Google Analytics.

Phil stated that enquiries have come through the website, and he has had quite a few people who have said they wanted to join, but when the form has come through the payment has not shown. He has therefore emailed them asking for payment and heard nothing more. He wondered if there was a way, we could develop a step-by-step system for people who want to join. Sam said he would talk to Web Smart. He also said that there are people who appear to be trying to penetrate our security.

**10. A.O.B:**

Beth commented that we could not close the meeting without a vote of thanks to Roy to has been absolutely the rock of the Society for so long and it will be very peculiar not having him there. She is very grateful to everyone for voting for her and knows she is filling really big shoes and is so pleased that Roy is going to carry on producing The Patriot. He has worked so hard and so tirelessly and encapsulates the spirit of the Society and she hopes we will be seeing him on the Zoom meetings in the future. Thank you so much for all you have done.

Roy responded that it was very kind of Beth, He has enjoyed and will continue to enjoy being a member of the Society but in a more relaxed fashion and he wished to tell the members that the Committee had kindly got together and given him a Thank You gift which was a very large number of vouchers for the Chiltern Brewery. He will enjoy using them and will purchase a large quantity of John Hampden’s Ale and toast the committee and members of the Society.

Roy reported that an email had been received The Chiltern Society who had heard from one of their members complaining that the Society should not be promoting the Ship Money Memorial because this commemorated John Hampden who had large estates in Jamaica with hundreds of slaves and he used his objection of Ship Money so that he could maintain the money that he made from slavery. This is so much politically correct nonsense that we drafted a letter back rebutting all these accusations. In fact, there was only one Hampden ever involved in slavery and that was The Bishop of Hereford, Renn Dickson Hampden who was descended from the Christchurch Barbados Hampdens and he lived 200 years after John Hampden and there is a website about slavery in which he is listed. We have rebutted these accusations and are waiting to hear from The Chiltern Society. There is now an FAQ entry on the website in case anyone else ask the question.

Renn Dickson Hampden was Rector at Ewelme, and he was a member of a very distant branch of the Hampden family. His name is on the Chalgrove monument together with a lot of other 19th century notables who may well have had links to slavery so there is always the possibility that someone will start creating about the names on that and want them removed.

Peter commented that The Chiltern Society were being uncooperative over the re-lettering of the monument, stating that it was not important and not a good idea. It is something that obviously needs doing but the Chiltern Society may have decided that they would rather not be involved. Roy said that he understood from a previous attempt to get the lettering re cut, that you could not do it because it would destroy the surface or make the lettering too big but may have been a technical matter. Peter pointed out that the person he had been talking to is a friend of his who specializes in doing this kind of work. If we don’t do this the original inscription will be lost and the last three lines have already been lost. The money has already been raised to do this work. The problem is getting Chiltern Council to give permission to do the work.

Phil mentioned the Chalgrove monument which might become a topic of conversation again with all the talk of Hampden slavery. The monument had been inherited by Renn Dickson Hampden’s grand daughter and she give it to Chalgrove Parish Council who are now the owners of the monument.

Gordon thanked Roy for his leadership and his willingness to allow the “revolutionaries” to join the group and he sent his best wishes to Miles and Alison.

Patricia thanked Roy for being so helpful to her with regard to her book, which she could not have completed without his help, explaining so much about the Hampdens. She would be interested in the Carisbrooke Castle visit if it comes to pass.

Ian Beckett commented that we should all beware because Derek Lester is halfway through his book on Chalgrove. Roy had had an email from him the other day about some article he had written, and Roy had suggested that he send him a copy, but he has heard nothing since. Ian has just read through the latest chapter of the book. Roy has admiration for the work that he has done on Chalgrove. We don’t always agree with all his conclusions, but when he produced some stuff recently which included some maps of how the battle progressed, it was brilliant. It explained how the troops approached the battlefield when either side of the great hedge and where the gaps were. It was absolutely superb; the best thing Roy had seen about the battle so far. He is a bit of a loose cannon but there is some good stuff there. Ian agreed that Derek has some interesting things to say.

It is not possible to arrange a venue and date for the next AGM – these matters will have to be decided at a later date. Sam commented that we had decided that this should be a combined face-to-face meeting combined with a Zoom meeting so that people from far away could still take part. It was agreed that the committee will continue to use Zoom for meetings.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 5.15 p.m.