**THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY**

**Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held on 27th May 2022 at Hampden House and via Zoom.**

**Present:**

Dr Beth Rogers (*Chairman)* (via Zoom), Mrs Anthea Coles *(Hon. Secretary),* Mr Sam. Hearn, (*Treasurer)* Mr Philip Broomfield *(Membership Secretary*), Lord Buckinghamshire and 13 other members of the Society plus several members via Zoom, including members from overseas.

**Apologies for absence:**

Apologies had been received from Lady Alison Buckinghamshire, Lady Helen Motteux, Michael Morris, Bruce Alexander, Maija Jansson, Cynthia Ettenfield, and Philip Vincent.

**The Minutes of the previous AGM:**

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

**Matters Arising:**

There were no matters arising.

**Welcome from the Chair:**

Beth Rogers welcomed everyone to the AGM via Zoom and apologized for being unable to be present in person. She reported as follow:

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 held £167 of restricted funds at the year-end relating to money’s collected on behalf of the Great Kimble artefacts restoration work. These have been paid over since the year end. All the Society’s remaining funds can be used to further any of the Society’s aims and objectives.

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. One new trustee was appointed in this way in 2021.

Membership The total number of members at the end of the year was 87 compared with 80 at the end of 2020. This is net increase of almost 9% 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

I have been climbing a steep learning curve since my election as Chair at the 2021 AGM. It was wonderful to read the testimonials for the previous chair Roy Bailey, but what big shoes to fill!

In June, a few intrepid members braved the rain and attended the annual wreath-laying at the Chalgrove Monument. The weather was awful. In future we will commemorate John Hampdens’ death at the memorial in the centre of Thame.

Dr Lynette Nusbacher’s Zoom talk in October attracted nearly 100 live viewers. A recording is available on our Website and Facebook page. It was an honour to host a talk by such a distinguished historian. Her insight into John Hampden’s strategic mind was both original and illuminating. In November new member Roger Howgate delivered a fascinating Zoom talk on the Hampden artefacts at Great Kimble.

Zoom expands the audience that we can reach and allows far flung and less mobile members to stay in contact. The Society has always embraced new technology that allows us to “punch above our weight” and we are developing our “hybrid working” skills.

Roy Bailey delivered a talk to the Kettner Society at the National Liberal Club, and Sam Hearn gave a virtual talk to the Abingdon U3A. Sam also organized a joint visit for members to Milton’s Cottage and the Jordans Meeting House, with a lovely lunch in-between. Member John Hobart gave a me a wonderful tour of Carisbrooke Castle and put me in contact with the team that runs it. We hope to organize a visit for members interested in the castle’s Hampden links

The Society was represented at Great Kimble Church in September, when the Hampden related artefacts restored by member Roger Howgate were on show. We also ran a stall at the Bucks Local History Fair in October. We plan to attend to the Thame History Fair in June 2022.

Peter Osborne and Jim Rodda have continued to work with the Chiltern Society, on our behalf, to ensure that the Prestwood Ship Money Monument is preserved and remains accessible and visible. Miles Buckinghamshire (our Patron) joined Peter and Jim for a site meeting with the Directors of the Chiltern Society (the monuments custodians) to discuss maintenance issues and the possible re-routing of the footpath.

Member, Simon Marsh of the Battlefields Trust alerted us to a planning application relating to St Lawrence’s Church in Brentford. The remains of many of those killed at the Battle of Brentford have now been removed and from the graveyard and reinterred elsewhere. The trustees wrote to both the developers and Hounslow Council expressing our support for the amendments requested by the Battlefields Trust. Aylesbury Town Council consulted the Society on the proposal to move the statue of John Hampden in the Market Square to a prominent nearby location.

The Society has recently renewed the loan agreements relating to our artefacts on display in Thame Museum. We are collaborating with them to improve the presentation of these objects. Peter Osborne is liaising with Amersham Museum to find the most appropriate way to display the lock of Hampden’s hair acquired by the Society in 2020.

Four editions of The Patriot Newsletter were published in 2021 and a great deal of preparatory work was carried out by Roy Bailey, the Editor, and others on the 100th edition of The Patriot. We hope that members are as pleased as we are with the bumper edition published in 2022

As ever, the activities of the Society depend on the team of committee members who volunteer their time and I am very grateful to Hon. Secretary Anthea Coles, Hon. Treasurer and Webmaster Sam Hearn, Membership Secretary Phil Broomfield, Peter Osborne, Roy Bailey and our Patron, Miles Buckinghamshire. We welcome other members to join us, as many hands make light work, and there are always opportunities to explore and extend your own skills in supporting the society. **Beth Rogers – Chair.**

**The Treasurer's Report:**

Sam presented the Society’s accounts to the end of December 2021, which showed that the Society was in a good financial position with a closing bank balance of £8,614. He commented that it was difficult or hold talks during lockdown and this AGM was the first meeting we had been able to hold in person.

He commented on the locket which had been purchased by the Society during lockdown by means of donations received and the assistance of Peter Osborne, who did the bidding at auction.

The society had donated toward the cost of the work carried out by Roger Howgate on artefacts at Great Kimble and had been able to increase the donation by the aid of Gift Aid.

Sam told the meeting that he had now closed one of the early Society bank accounts as it had become defunct, and that Beth was now signatory on the main current account. **Sam Hearn, Hon. Treasurer.**

Miles Buckinghamshire thanked Sam for his work in maintaining the accounts. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Annabel Bailey and seconded by Charles Harvey and voting was unanimous in favour.

**The Membership Secretary's Report:** Prepared by Phil Broomfield

Since the last AGM, 7 new members have joined the Society with 22 renewals of member who had lapsed of whom 15 had paid whilst 7 had not as yet and one member who was not renewing, giving a total of 86 members now. The number has fluctuated around the mid-80s and 98 and Phil would like to find out the reasons for people joining the Society and how we can look to retaining them.

**Update on *The Patriot*:**

Roy Bailey thanked everyone who had contributed towards the 100th bumper edition which had been enthusiastically received and issued a plea for future contributions. He stated that he would be standing down as editor of the newsletter at the end of the year and suggested that if anyone would be prepared to take on the task, they should contact him in order that he could “show them the ropes”.

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

The front page of the website has been updated and now contains information about events that would be of interest to members relating to John Hampden and the Civil War. We now have a formal contract with our web-site provider.

**Election of Officers:**

No nominations had been received from members to join the committee. Nominations for the existing committee were read out and voted on as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Position** | **Name** | **Proposed by** | **Seconded by** | **Voting** |
| Chairman | Dr Beth Rogers | Anthea Coles | Sam Hearn | Unanimous |
| Hon. Secretary | Anthea Coles | Beth Rogers | Roy Bailey | Unanimous |
| Hon. Treasurer | Sam Hearn | Beth Rogers | Anthea Coles | Unanimous |
| Membership Secretary | Philip Broomfield | Roy Bailey | Anthea Coles | Unanimous |
| Committee Member | Peter Osborne | Sam Hearn | Annabel Bailey | Unanimous |

It was therefore confirmed that the above appointed committee would stand for the coming year.

**Update on Events:**

**Ship Money Memorial:**

Peter Osborne commented on the amount of work carried out by himself and Jim Rodda at the Ship Money Memorial at Prestwood and reported that the memorial receives a large number of visitors, and he had run out of Society leaflets, which are placed at the site in a weatherproof box. Roy will organize the printing of a further supply of these. Peter has also been campaigning for a new access to the memorial as the road is narrow and steep with no parking in the vicinity and is designated as a route for HGVs, making it very dangerous for pedestrians. He has now arranged for the footpath to be diverted to the other side of the hedge, running up the side of the field, and this will make for a much safer route for those wishing to visit the monument.

**Thame Events:**

A discussion took place about the history weekend being held in Thame over the weekend 18th/19th June, where the Sealed Knot are doing a re-enactment of the Chinnor “Skirmish” at the Rugby Ground. This will be a full weekend event with the laying of a wreath in Thame at the site of the building in which John Hampden died with a Guard of Honour formed by the Sealed Knot, events at the Thame Museum and a History Fair. There will also be the opportunity on Sunday, 19th June to visit Great Kimble at 3 pm to see the restored artefacts and make a tour of relevant sites. At this point Roger Howgate thanked the Society for the generous donations and support he had received in respect of the restoration of the two artefacts connected with John Hampden.

An appeal was made for anyone who felt able to help on the Society stall or with any of the events being held over this weekend to come forward as the committee were going to be very stretched.

**AOB:**

American Member, Gordon Schreck, attending via Zoom, reported that he was trying to persuade the Hampden-Sidney College to publicise information about the John Hampden Society with the object of inspiring some of the students to join the Society.

Bob Hammond, a long-standing member of the Society, gave a short but well received, report on research he had been carrying out in connection with the second wife of John Hampden, Letitia Vachell, who had cared for ***The Patriot’s*** children on the death of their natural mother. This was a particularly salient topic as the AGM was held on Mothering Sunday and quite a few of the members attending the AGM had also attended the Mothering Sunday service at Great Hampden Church, where they had been warmly welcomed by the Reverend Deniol Heywood and presented with small flowering plants, some of which were then fittingly placed on Hampden Graves in the churchyard.

Roy Bailey remembered that just prior to lockdown we had been talking about placing a plaque commemorating John Hampden in the Church and he had contacted the appropriate authorities for their comments/permission to do so. Everything then was shelved during the pandemic and now needs to be revisited with a view to taking the matter further.

Maurice Kirtland mentioned the fact that John Hampden had been educated in Thame and that some years ago a bed purporting to have been the bed he used when at school there, which had been housed in Aylesbury Museum had been sold. It had been purchased by Jamestown Settlement Museum but despite attempts by the Society to obtain a photograph, this had not happened. American member, Rich Howell, attending via Zoom volunteered to try to follow up on this and see if he could locate the whereabouts of the bed. He also mentioned that he would be interested in becoming a committee member and his co-option to the committee will be considered at the next committee meeting.

Charles Harvey mentioned the copies of the John Hampden biography he is holding for distribution to schools.

There was a vote of thanks to Tim Oliver and his family for allowing us to have the use of Hampden House for the AGM, which facility was greatly appreciated.

Beth thanked Sam Hearn for taking the chair and running the meeting in her unavoidable absence.

At this point, the meeting was declared closed.