



MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ULSTER ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Zoom meeting on Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 7pm.

The President of UAH, Mrs Primrose Wilson welcomed all attendees.

1. Notice of Meeting

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read, having been proposed by Sean Hagan and seconded by Simon Bridge.

2. Apologies

The Hon Secretary, Mr Alastair Rankin, read the apologies received from Professor James Stevens Curl, Kevin Baird, Lord O'Neill and Stephen Craig. The President also recorded apologies from Lydia Inglis, Jeremy Shrimpton and Paula Wilson.

3. Minutes of the Twenty-Second AGM held on Tuesday 23rd June 2020

The minutes, having been previously circulated, were taken as read. The President asked if there were any suggested amendments. There being none, the minutes were proposed by Karen Latimer and seconded by Simon Bridge. The meeting agreed and accordingly the minutes were signed.

4. Approval of Amendments to Articles of Association

The Hon Secretary, Mr Alastair Rankin, explained the amendments to those present: the first amendment was a change from Chairman to Chair in the clause 2.1 definition. A major amendment was made to Article 17 regarding meetings; the Hon Secretary read Articles 17.1 and 17.2 to ensure that electronic meetings would be legal going forward, with the requirement to attend in person removed from clause 9. Wording with regards to the capital endowment fund has been changed to £5,000 or more in clause 12.

The Hon Secretary clarified that tonight's meeting was legal as legislation allowing electronic meetings will lapse on 5th April.

The amendments were proposed by the Hon Secretary, and seconded by John Edmund. Those present were in agreement.

5. Hon. Treasurer's Report

The President asked Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson to report on the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Honorary Treasurers Report for the Year to 31st December 2020

I have the pleasure of presenting this report as the Society's Honorary Treasurer. Despite a challenging year, the Society continued in its activities to promote and protect our historic built environment in 2020.

Firstly I have to report that the Society's net worth has seen a small decrease by 1.7% to £153,124. This decrease is due to a significant fall in the valuation of our investments in Charifund; which was partly counteracted through achieving an operating surplus in charitable activities.

The Society's turnover dropped by 40% from £297,944 to £179,456. This fall can partially attributed to the effects of COVID-19, however the turnover remains comparable to that achieved in 2018 and remains in line with a biennial trend which is based on the implementation of high turnover projects on a two yearly cycle. 2019 had seen additional project work, particularly the Old Museum Building: Back to Life Stage 1 and the Conservation Without Frontiers Summer School, both of which did not run in 2020.

Events

Events income has decreased from £10,740 in 2019 to £2,824 in 2020. This is due to the impact of COVID-19 on the events programme which could not run as planned, although towards the end of 2020, UAH were able to put events online. The Society appreciates the efforts of the Events Committee in generating these funds.

Publications

Publications gross income was £13,715 in 2020 versus £17,542 in 2019. This decrease is due to the affects of COVID-19 on distribution channels, with reduced sales direct to retailers and through our distribution company; although online sales remained strong.

This figure does not take into consideration book storage of £3,150 or £4,979 postage costs. The Society appreciates the efforts of the Publications Committee and staff in generating these funds.

Membership

Despite the impact of COVID-19 income from membership subscriptions remained relatively stable with a total income from subscriptions, donations and legacies coming in

at £24,755 in 2020 versus £25,078 in 2019. With thanks to all our members for their continued support through subscriptions and donations. With particular thanks to Mr Dunlop for his kind donation of £1,000 and The Dorinda Lady Dunleath Charitable Trust for their kind donation of £500 in 2020.

Investments

The revaluation of investments have resulted in a decrease in income of £21,693 compared to a £17,945 increase in value in 2019.

Consultancy

Income from consultancy decreased significantly from £18,921 in 2019 to £3,847 in 2020. This is due to reduced opportunities for consultancy work in 2020, and is more in line with 2018's consultancy figures. UAH continued work with Belfast City Council on 'Open Heritage Belfast', part of European Heritage Open Days, and also assisted in the Maintenance Awareness Programme for Derry City & Strabane District Council.

Deferred Income

Deferred income for the year amounted to £20,931. £20,000 is to be attributed to a salary for a role which has since been recruited in 2021. £931 was received in donations for the production of a publication due to be expended in 2021.

Projects

In 2020 we have continued the Heritage at Risk project through the funding of our partners the Department of Communities, Historic Environment Division. We commenced the Hands on Heritage project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

In partnership with Belfast Natural History & Philosophical Society we have also undertaken a review of opportunities and threats for the Old Museum Building: Back to Life project in light of recent events as part of a COVID-19 response project funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We would like to express our particular thanks to our key project funders in 2020.

Conclusion

It is positive to see that in 2020 given the challenges presented by COVID-19 UAH managed to remain active, and despite a reduced turn over, ended the year in an operating surplus.

Whilst overall the society finished 2020 in a deficit, it has been significantly mitigated through careful cost management and reduction in staffing. With thanks to all - members, staff and committee for their contributions in 2020.

Looking forward to 2021, the situation with COVID-19 is ongoing, however the outlook is brighter than that the commencement of 2020; with more opportunities for the organisation to gain unrestricted or earned income, some of which have already been completed and some are on the horizon. UAH has recommenced events for online delivery and hope to see a corresponding increase in revenue for 2021. UAH investments may also continue to be affected by the wider economic context resulting from Covid-19 and Brexit, but they have increased in value since the December valuation. The staff and committee continue to actively work to address the challenges presented by COVID-19.

In conclusion I would like to once again thank all the committee members for their hard work in generating funds and I would like to put on record my thanks to Nikki, Connie, Maura and Isabel who helped and supported me throughout 2020.

Rosie Ford-Hutchinson

Honorary Treasurer

The President thanked Mrs Ford-Hutchinson and opened the floor for questions. Karen Latimer thanked the staff on behalf of the Publications Committee and thanked those who had donated to the new publication in memory of Gordon Wheeler. The President recorded her thanks for the donations and congratulated the Honorary Treasurer, the Chief Executive

and staff on the accounts. Paul Harron also recorded his thanks. The accounts were proposed by Rosie Ford-Hutchinson, seconded by Geoff Brooks, and adopted.

6. Committee's Report

Dr David Johnston, Chairman, presented the report of behalf of the Committee for the year to 31 December 2020.

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my pleasure to once again bring the report on the activities of the Society for the year ended December 2020 and what a year it was. I do not think that when we had our last AGM via ZOOM any of us though we would be in a similar position a year later.

At the outset I want to highlight our fantastic staff team who as ever deserve our sincere thanks. As I have said previously they never fail to rise to whatever challenge is before them and while no one could have predicted the last year they have certainly risen to the challenge with good humour and perseverance.

Ms Nikki McVeigh, our chief executive, has as ever been central to all that has been achieved bringing her vision, enthusiasm and vigour to the life of Ulster Architectural Heritage. Nikki on behalf of us all I want to record a public and sincere thank you.

Also huge thanks are due to Ms Maura Ahern, Dr Connie Gerrow and Ms Isabel McKernan who have all worked in a flexible way and in a collegiate manner, while moving to remote working, to ensure their respective areas of work were facilitated and managed in the most difficult of circumstance. There was also a rotating staff furlough programme and I thank them for their co-operation with that.

As ever much of the work of UAH is conducted through our Sub committees and they continue to do great work.

We have already heard from the Hon. Treasurer about the financial situation which I think is a very positive story in the year that it was. I would also acknowledge with thanks a number of generous donations during the year. Things financial remain a central focus to all that we do and that is likely to be the case going forward.

I would particularly like to thank our Hon. Treasurer, Rosie Forde Hutchinson for her ongoing zeal and commitment and to Rosie and the finance committee who do such important work I say a sincere thank you.

Dr Murray Power led the Events committee and in a very difficult year I want to thank him for all that he has done. As you know many of our events moved to an online format and thanks are due to Mr Stephen Craig who gave generously of his time and expertise to facilitate this. Our staff have really embraced this and it has been one of the real learning aspects of the year such that going forward online events are likely to become a permanent fixture.

The Publication committee chaired by Mrs Karen Latimer have continued to work hard and this year saw the launch of the 'Plight of the Big House in Northern Ireland' by JAK Dean. This poignant book has been very well received and sales have been brisk.

Thanks to the publication committee for all their hard work once again. I know they have other "irons in the fire" and we look forward to future publications.

The Conservation, Planning and Policy committee chaired by John Anderson remain active whether leading or supporting campaigns or advising in others. John always enlightens our committee meetings by bringing some nuggets of architectural heritage to our attention. Again it has been a difficult year and we thank John for all his work.

The whole committee and officers group continue to give generously of their time and knowledge. I greatly value their support and I would like to pay tribute to their often unseen but always enthusiastic contribution to all that UAH achieves. The officer group made up of John Anderson as vice chair, Rosie Ford Hutchinson as Hon Treasurer and Alastair Rankin as Hon Secretary, have once again fulfilled these positions with diligence and zeal.

I do not propose to detail all the activity during the last year and I would refer you to the Directors report contained in the accounts for full details of the years activities. However I would make mention of some highlights:

- Heritage at Risk Northern Ireland - this is the Society's major on-going project.
- Hands on Heritage which focuses on public consultation and the development of a heritage recording & reporting app and online toolkit to better support public participation in the protection of built heritage in Northern Ireland.
- UAH On-line - as a result of financial support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Covid-19 Emergency Fund, UAH was able to develop an enhanced on-line publishing capability; this enabled the Society to deliver events and tours programme and improved communications on built heritage issues on-line.
- Open Heritage Belfast - as part of European Heritage Open Days 2020, funded by and working in partnership with Belfast City Council, UAH programmed and delivered an on-line tour.
- Old Museum: Back to Life - Stage 1 of this important project for the Society, working in partnership with Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund was completed early in the year.
- Maintenance Week NI (2020) - UAH led on this important initiative by hosting a series of on-line events.

So it has been another very busy year albeit a very unusual one however, I hope I have given you a flavour of all that has been achieved.

UAH is a not for profit organisation with a 50-year record of achievement. It is the lead independent voice for the promotion and protection of Ulster's built heritage, focused on encouraging regeneration for the benefit of people and communities. This year we have achieved a lot but there remains much to do!

As I conclude I thank everyone associated with UAH for their ongoing support which is now more important than ever and I thank each of you for all that has been done to see us through such unprecedented times. I am certainly enthused by all that achieved.

The response of so many and the continued excellence of UAH has been a real source of inspiration and great hope for the future and in the words of US Admiral William McRaven, “The only thing more contagious than a virus is hope.”

Thank you once again.

The Chairman opened the floor to questions but none were raised.

7. Election of Members and Officers of Committee

At this point, the President announced that the following members were retiring from committee by rotation:

Mr Alastair Rankin
Dr Paul Harron
Dr Murray Power

However, having been duly proposed and seconded and being eligible, and with the agreement of the meeting, the President declared those previously named elected to the Committee. The Committee & Officers for 2021 are as follows:

Officers:

- Mr Alastair Rankin, Honorary Secretary
- Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson, Honorary Treasurer
- Mr. John H. Anderson, Vice-Chairman
- Dr David Johnston, Chairman

Committee:

- Mr Geoff Brooks
- Mr Stephen Craig
- Mr John Edmund
- Dr Claire Foley
- Dr Paul Harron
- Mr Marcus Patton
- Dr Murray Power
- Dr Patricia Warke

8. Appointment of Examiners of Accounts

The Chairman asked the Hon Treasurer Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson to bring a proposal to the meeting. Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson proposed Ross Boyd Ltd be reappointed as the Society’s Examiners of Accounts. This was seconded by Mr John Edmund.

All those present were in agreement.

9. Any Other Business

The President congratulated the Society and wished UAH well in the coming year. There being no further business, the meeting concluded.