**ULSTER ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE**

Minutes of the twenty fourth Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 25 April at 7pm.

UAH President, Primrose Wilson welcomed members to the meeting which was also held on line via Zoom.

1. **Notice of Meeting**

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Claire Foley, Patricia Warke, James Stephens Curl, Marcus Patton, John Edmund, Alison Ince, Lydia Inglis and Demelza Hurley.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 March 2021 were agreed subject to the addition of L Inglis; D Hurley and J Wilson to Paragraph 3 Apologies.

The minutes were proposed by John Anderson and seconded by Edward Wilson.

1. **Treasurer’s Report for the Year to 31 December 2021**

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

The Society’s net worth increased by £139,406 in 2020 to £292,530. This increase was partly due to a gain in valuation from investments of £14,060 and also a generous legacy of £118,650 from a former member of the publications committee, Gordon Wheeler. This legacy is to be used for our future publications and does not contribute to core funds. The increase in our investment income contrasts favourably with a loss in in 2020. Our other charitable activities made an operating surplus of £6786.

The Society’s turnover increased from £179,458 to £402,688 due to an increase in project income and the publications legacy.

**Events**

Events income dropped from £2,824 in 2020 to a total of £1,723 in 2021 mainly due to Covid restrictions. The events committee were able to host walks in Dromore and Moira and several lectures facilitated by the wonders of Zoom and also a tour of the restored Grand Opera House. The Society appreciates the efforts of the events committee given the restrictions.

**Publications**

Publications income remained stable at £13,715 against £13,609 in 2020. Distribution channels were still restricted by Covid but online sales remain strong. The Society’s new publication, W.J. Barre – A Vigorous Mind by Dr Paul Harron was launched in time for Christmas sales. The publications figure does not take into consideration book storage of approximately £3, 000 per annum. The Society appreciates the efforts of the publications committee and the staff in generating these funds.

**Membership**

Total income from membership subscriptions of £21,371 was down by approximately £800 from 2020. This is a worrying trend which would need investigation. The Society thanks all our existing members for their continued support.

**Investments**

The revaluation of our investments has resulted in an increase in the Society’s income of £14,060 in 2021 compared to a loss of £21,693 in 2020.

**Consultancy**

The consultancy figure for 2021 was £12,519 up from the previous year’s figure of £3,847. The Society completed work for Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and for Belfast City Council.

**Deferred income**

Deferred income for the year amounted to £18,170 which relates to a core multi annual grant due to be received in 2022 from Belfast City Council.

**Projects**

The projects total in 2021 amounted to £115,915 from £81,465 the previous year. Some notable projects included Hands on Heritage and Heritage Arts Challenge both funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The year ended with a wonderful evening in the City Hall for the Heritage Angel Awards funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and the Department for Communities

**Conclusion**

In conclusion it is good to see that in 2021, given the challenges presented by Covid 19, the Society managed to remain active ending the year with an operating surplus and movement of funds of £139,406. This surplus includes the publication legacy and interest from our investments leaving a contribution of £6786 towards funds from our other charitable activities.

I would like to thank all the staff and committee members for their hard work generating funds. I would also like to put on record my particular thanks to Maura who has managed the office during our time without a chief executive and has been a great help to me during the year.

Rosie Ford-Hutchinson

Honorary Treasurer

The President requested a change of wording on page 21 of the accounts to read - “The designated reserves related to excess funding raised for the publication of Buildings of South Count Down and is to be allocated to the production of a future publication.”

The accounts were then proposed by Edward Wilson and seconded by Karen Latimer.

1. **Committee report for the year to 31 December 2021**

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my pleasure to once again bring the report on the activities of the Society for the year ended December 2021. How wonderful it is to be able to meet once again in person which, only goes to underscore the difficulties of the past year.

At the outset I once again want to highlight our fantastic staff team who as ever deserve our sincere thanks for rising to whatever challenge is before them with dedication and perseverance.

It has been a year of change with significant comings and goings. Nikki McVeigh was our chief executive for 7 years and during the year she moved to a new position with the National Trust back in her beloved Fermanagh. We were sorry to see Nikki go but we wish her every success in her new role. Her tenure as Chief executive has been a time of transition and growth for Ulster Architectural Heritage and this is in no small part due to the drive and enthusiasm which Nikki brought to her position and we send her our sincere thanks for all that she has done and our very best wishes for the future.

Dr Connie Gerrow also move employment during the year to work with Ulster University and to be nearer her home and family.

Connie brought huge energy and vision to her various roles with UAH and as we thank her we also wish her and her family every success.

Also huge thanks are due to Maura Ahern, and Isabel McKernan who have worked hard to maintain the activities of the Society.

During the year we also welcomed Ms Victoria Sharpe and Ms Errin McElhinney who have been playing a sort of “musical chairs” fulfilling various roles.

We were also delighted to have Mr Sebastian Graham join the team as the Heritage at Risk Officer working in partnership with HED. Sebastian is a past “Heritage Angel” so his appointment was particularly appropriate.

And of course we were delighted to appoint Dr Paul Harron as the new Chief Executive. Paul needs no introduction and brings a wealth of experience and skill and we look forward to working with him.

Also on the subject of new additions we congratulate Isabel and her husband on the birth of a baby daughter, Maebh and also Sebastian and his wife on the birth of their baby daughter, Eadie. So it really has been a productive year with exciting times ahead!

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 while stable during the last year will remain a central focus to all that we do with the issue of core funding being an increasing concern as we resume our post Covid activities.

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 again this year we had a programme of hybrid activities combining both virtual events and face to face ones. There were many benefits from this and we want to embrace those going forward and indeed the hybrid nature of this AGM is an example of that. A special welcome to those of you joining us on ZOOM!

Thanks to Murray for leading the committee.

I would also make special mention of Mr Stephen Craig and his invaluable IT knowledge and support which has been essential in the developing our virtual presence. Without Stephens support we simply could not have managed so sincere thanks to him.

The Publication committee chaired by Mrs Karen Latimer have continued to work hard and this year saw the launch of the ‘WJ Barre, 1830-1867: A Vigorous Mind, by our own Dr Paul Harron. This is a wonderful book in every way and if you have not got a copy I commend it to you.

We have already heard from the treasurer of the most generous legacy from Mr Gordon Wheeler for the work of the publication committee. We are delighted about this and so buoyed up by such support we look forward to the future output from the publications committee.

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 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 would also like to thank Dr Patricia Warke and Dr Claire Foley who are standing down from committee for their dedication and support over recent years.

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 year’s activities.

However I would make mention of some highlights:

The Hands on Heritage project continues to be developed. This 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. This will offer an opportunity to everyone to get involved in our heritage and has huge potential.

The Heritage Angel Awards were a particular high point. The Award evenings are always inspirational but it is was a particular delight this year to see everyone out enjoying themselves once again in the wonderful surroundings of Belfast City Hall after another difficult period of lockdown. As ever the quality and range of entrants were a tribute to the heritage sector in Northern Ireland and of course we were all delighted to see Marcus Patton get a richly deserve lifetime achievement award.

So it has been another busy and unusual year. As I reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic I think that we have all relearned something of the humility of our forefathers and a renewed respect for nature in all its forms. Many aspects of our future lives will change with the need to live sustainably being to the fore in all that we do.

It is said that 63% of our waste comes from construction and demolition and while we will, of course, build new structures in future the central message is that we need to make much better use of the precious and finite resource that is our existing buildings, always reusing, regenerating and repurposing them before even considering replacement. The promotion of such sustainable practices to help safeguard the future of our planet is something Ulster Architectural Heritage has long supported.

Our built heritage is precious, finite and irreplaceable. Historic buildings in our countryside, our villages, our towns and our cities are the scenery against which we all live our lives. Their value in physical, cultural, social and economic terms is now being increasingly recognised under headings such as tourism, the economy, health & wellbeing, creating a sense of Place, Shared Spaces and perhaps even Social Cohesion.

As I conclude I thank everyone associated with UAH for their ongoing support which is clearly now more important than ever and I thank each of you for all that has been done to see us through another difficult year.

Thank you once again.

There being no questions, the President mentioned the recent passing of Dorinda Lady Dunleath a long time member of the Society, following which Alastair Rankin paid tribute to her.

1. **Elections of Members and Officers of the Committee**

The President advised that Patricia Warke, Paul Harron and Claire Foley will step down from the Committee.

Officers

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

Committee:

* Geoff Brooks
* Stephen Craig
* John Edmund
* Marcus Patton
* Murray Power

All those present were in agreement.

1. **Appointment of Examiners of Accounts**

The President took as the next item the Appointment of Examiners, Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson proposed Ross Boyd Ltd be reappointed as the Society’s examiners, seconded by Alastair Rankin.

1. **Any Other Business**

Edward Wilson asked if there was a further update on the redevelopment of the Old Museum Building. Dr David Johnston advised that the project remains on hold following Covid, he advised that members will be kept informed of all developments.

Dorothy Porteous enquired on the future of the Assembly Rooms and was advised that no recent information was available. Paul Harron agreed to update the UAH website with any new developments.

**Events**

Murray Power advised that it is hoped to hold one event per month the in the coming year. He asked members to check social media and the UAH website for announcements.

1. **Guest Presentation**

The President invited Dr David Johnston, Guest Speaker to deliver his presentation –

‘En Route to World Heritage’ The Story of Gracehill.

The President thanked Dr Johnston and there being no further business declared the meeting closed.