



THE  
NORWICH  
SOCIETY

---

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023 – DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday 25th April 2023 at 7pm - The Auditorium in the Forum, Millennium Plain

In the presence of the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Kevin Maguire

### 1. Welcome to the Lord Mayor by the Chair

The Chair of the Norwich Society, Barry Howell welcomed the Lord Mayor and members to the meeting.

**Participants: 62 members.**

The Lord Mayor and Dr Tim Pestell also attended.

### 2. Short address by the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Kevin Maguire

The meeting opened with the Lord Mayor of Norwich, Honorary President of The Norwich Society giving a short address.

The Mayor noted he was pleased to attend his third AGM and also to have been involved in the Centenary launch at Bishop Bridge. He is impressed with what the Society has achieved in the past, but pleased that it is looking forward to the future and taking on issues such as climate change. He felt that in the case of The Norwich Society, its heart and head worked effectively together and that it did a good job of testing the council's vision. He voiced his appreciation for the passion of its members and the time they give, and hoped that this work would continue.

### 3. Apologies were received from Eleonor Martin, Jane Newall, David Taylor, John Howkins, Ron Ingamells and Anne Pooley.

### 4. Minutes of the 2022 AGM

The 2022 AGM minutes were posted on the Society's website and printed copies were also available at the meeting. There were no comments.

**The adoption of the minutes was proposed by Jon Boon and seconded by Vanessa Trevelyan and were approved.**

## 5. Matters Arising

The Chair, Barry Howell raised the general issue of attracting members to sit on the various committees and working groups, and also of the gender imbalance of the Trustees, noting that once again no women have stood for election. He encouraged anybody interested in getting involved to come forward.

Barry Howell also noted that at the 2022 AGM he had promised to balance the books and that as members will see in the Annual Report, this was achieved in 2022.

Barry Howell asked if there were any other matters arising from audience members, and there no further matters were raised.

## 6. Chair's presentation of Annual Report and Centenary Programme

Barry Howell began by noting that the timing of the AGM was back to its traditional place in the calendar following the pandemic, and that it was this set of circumstances that had led to the Lord Mayor addressing three AGM's as our Honorary President. He noted that the pandemic had forced us to change how we operate and that much of our work was done on-line, saving travelling time and often resulting on more focused meetings, but a downside of this has been a reduction of interaction with the members and the opportunity to get more people involved in the committees and working groups. He thanked everybody who has volunteered their time and effort over the past year, but also made a call to action, noting that we needed a steady stream of volunteers to step up and help with the work of the Society. He noted that whilst relevant expertise is valued, it is not necessary, and that we need volunteers from all walks of life who share a passion for the City and want to make a difference.

Barry noted that we had kicked off the Centenary year with an event at Bishop Bridge, thanking the Whiffers and everybody else involved for helping to make the event a success. He noted that Vanessa Trevelyan would be talking about the Centenary events programme, but that he'd like to mention the Centenary Commemorative Plaque scheme to recognise lesser-known or previously overlooked aspects of the city's history, including places, people and stories. He noted that this project was outside our usual operations and that to fund it we were applying for grants but we would also be throwing it open to the membership to donate funds, and that details would be provided in the next Aspects of Norwich mailing.

Barry reported on the ongoing efforts to engage more fully with officers at Norwich City Council, and on our continued Anglia Square campaign where we have been successful in reducing the

height of the development but still have a number of concerns. He noted that nominations for the 2023 Design Awards which now also involves Norwich University of the Arts would be opening soon, with the awards taking place in November.

Barry went on to thank our sponsors and financial supporters, and in particular his employers Larking Gowen who have generously allowed him the time to be involved with the Society. He also thanked his colleagues on the Executive Committee both past and present and finally former Society Administrator Sheila Kefford, who first encouraged him to get involved some 25 years ago, enabling him to learn so much about the City, make new friends and have a thoroughly good time.

Barry ended by saying it had been an honour and a privilege to Chair the Society for the past three years, and thanked everybody for giving him the opportunity.

## **7. Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts**

The 2022 accounts were posted on the Society's website and printed copies were also available at the meeting.

The Treasurer, Neil Sturgeon reported that the Society's total income for the year ended 31 December 2022 was £26,304 compared to £21,387 in 2021, an increase of £4,917. This increase was mainly as a result of a generous legacy as well as higher donations than in 2021.

The majority of the Society's income continued to be in the form of membership fees - total membership income for the year, including income from the relaunched Business Membership scheme, was £15,745 compared to £16,173 in 2021.

Costs for 2022 totalled £26,031 compared to £34,233 in 2021 - a decrease of approximately £8,200. This decrease was mainly due to no depreciation and amortisation charges in 2022, as the related assets were fully written off in 2021's accounts. Other costs in 2022 were very much in line with 2021.

Gift Aid reclaims continue to be an important source of income for the Society. The refunds owing for the four years up to and including 31 December 2021 were finally paid by HMRC during 2022, resulting in a total of £7,616 being received. The Gift Aid claim for 2022 amounted to £2,075, and this has been received from HMRC in 2023.

Overall, the Society achieved a surplus of £273 compared to a deficit of £12,846 in 2021, a pleasing improvement of £13,119.

At 31 December 2022, the Society's total reserves amounted to £56,789. This included cash at bank of £56,071 compared to £49,829 at 31 December 2021.

Two questions were raised by the audience. The first concerned Office Costs and of what this sum consisted, the second related to the amount of donations and why this was considerably higher than in 2021. The Treasurer did not have detailed records to hand and was therefore unable to answer the questions, but noted that the details would be made available to members in the minutes of this meeting which would be posted on the website, and also in the monthly newsletter.

**The adoption of the accounts was proposed by Barry Howell and seconded by Simeon Jackson and were approved.**

*Subsequent investigation confirmed:*

- Office Costs of £1313.64 included the cost of a replacement laptop, public liability insurance, ZOOM and IT licences.
- Donations Income of £4205.50 included two high value donations from individuals of £1530 and £2,000.

## 8. 2022-2023 Events Programme

The Chair of the Publicity and Events Committee, Vanessa Trevelyan gave a presentation about the Society's events and communications activities since the last AGM and an update on upcoming events in 2023. Further details can be found in the 2022 Annual Report.

Vanessa reported that with the relaxation of lockdown measures, the Society had resumed its in-person events in July 2022, including walking tours and a visit to Mannington Hall where members were guided around by Lady Walpole. She noted that during lockdown the popular Historians talks had migrated to Zoom which had been well received, enabling a far larger number of members to enjoy them, and that whilst we had returned to live talks in The Forum in October 2022 with topics ranging from researching the Strangers to Norwich's French Borough, speakers were also being asked to record their talks so that we could continue to post them on our YouTube channel where they can conveniently be watched at anytime.

In July The Norwich Society collaborated with Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery on a one-day symposium - Living With Historic Buildings. The symposium brought together an expert panel of those working with a broad range of heritage sites, which resulted in a wide-ranging and stimulating discussion on strategic approaches to the care and use of historic buildings. In September the Norwich Society contributed a talk to The Forum's Heritage Open Days programme. The national theme for HODs was Astounding Inventions, and our talk featured the Norwich textiles trade and the "astounding invention" of the Jacquard loom, which revolutionised weaving but, ultimately, led to the decline of the artisan weaver.

Looking forward, Vanessa talked about the events planned for the Society's centenary year. In addition to a full programme of walking tours, talks and visits, there will be a photographic exhibition in The Forum during Heritage Open Days week, of 100 places that the Norwich Society has been involved in in some way, from saving Bishop Bridge to awarding Rose Lane car park a Design Award. She noted we will also be seeking nominations from members and the public for places that are particularly important to them. Finally Vanessa reported that we would be taking part in Norfolk's Healthy Environment Day event outside The Forum in June.

#### **9. Election of Officers and Trustees to the Executive Committee**

As stated In the AGM Agenda Barry Howell, Chair of Trustees stepped down.

Details of those standing were included on the AGM agenda, and their personal statements included in a 'meet the candidates' document which were both posted on the Society's website and available in printed form at the meeting.

Those standing were:

- Jon Boon (Chair, new candidate – former Vice-chair)
- David Taylor (Vice-chair, new candidate and Honorary Secretary, re-election)
- Neil Sturgeon (Honorary Treasurer, re-election)
- John Howkins (Trustee, re-election)
- Simeon Jackson (Trustee, re-election)
- Michael Jordan (Trustee, re-election)
- Alan Theobald (Trustee, re-election)
- Willem Buttinger (new candidate)

**The current Chair, Barry Howell suggested voting for the positions en bloc, and all those standing were elected with a majority show of hands.**

#### 10. Any Other Business

Barry Howell opened the floor to questions and comments.

The Lord Mayor proposed a vote of thanks to Barry Howell for the work he has undertaken and time he has given to the Society and wished him well.

#### INTERVAL

Barry Howell introduced Dr Tim Pestell from Norfolk Museums Service who gave an Illustrated talk about the progress of the Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn and responded to questions from the audience.

Barry Howell thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

*The Norwich Society is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registration number 1189593.*