

# THE FRIENDS OF GUILDFORD HOUSE

## Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

held at The Guildhall, High Street, Guildford  
on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 2.30p

### AGM Minutes

#### Present:

Committee:	Hilary Leigh	Acting Interim Chairman
	Greta Willis	Hon. Secretary
	John Surrey	Hon. Treasurer
	Beryl Davies	Lectures Organiser
	Gwyneth Craske	Visits Organiser
	Ann Fearey	
	Tessa Johnson	
	Sylvia Jones	
	Phyl Morris	
	Pauline Read	

and 20 members.

Hilary Leigh introduced the meeting and welcomed the members present.

#### 1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies had been received from Mavis Archer, Janet Baxter, Sheila Beswick, Jenny Bray, Richard Broughton, Julia and David Cade, Val Charles, Anki Gregory, Hilary Mitchell, Sue Odell, Cynthia Watson, Jean and Harry Wickens.

#### 2. Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

The Minutes had been circulated with the Agenda.

There was one correction – under Apologies for Absence Francis Eggo should read Frances Eggo.

Their adoption was proposed by Barbara Logan, seconded by Ann Hyde and approved by the meeting. They were signed by the Acting Interim Chairman, Hilary Leigh.

#### 3. Matters Arising.

The Hon. Sec. pointed out that contrary to the statement under item 9, the EGM had not been called until now in the hope that members would come forward to serve on the Committee.

#### 4. Committee Report 2023 – 2024.

The Report had been circulated with the Agenda. Hilary Leigh emphasised it's

main points the lack of suitable volunteers joining the committee and the fact that membership was now only 100. She thanked Beryl Davies for her hard work putting on a full programme of interesting lectures and Gwyneth Craske for arranging a variety of visits under difficult circumstances. The cost of coach hire and entry fees had both rocketed and booking arrangements for parties were more difficult than before the pandemic. She thanked David Worrall for the valuable role he played as Web Manager.

## **5. Hon. Treasurer's Report.**

Copies of the accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting. They had been prepared by John Surrey, the Hon. Treasurer and reviewed by Arthur Savage, the External Independent Examiner. Arthur Savage was thanked for his services.

The Balance Sheet was self explanatory, but John elaborated on some points -

- a). Subscriptions £1500 represented 100 at £15 per head.
- b). There had been a deficit of £588 for the year.
- c). The release of provisions made in previous years of £2730 represented unpaid expenses such as bills expected but not submitted, cheques not drawn, etc.
- d). Donation of £175 was towards the cost of a reception to launch an art exhibition at Guildford House Gallery.

The acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Peter Bates, seconded by Pat Gates and agreed unanimously.

## **6. Election of Officers and Committee.**

In spite of numerous requests over the last two or more years, there was only one nomination.

Hon. Treasurer – John Surrey

*Proposed* – Ann Fearey, *seconded* – Hilary Leigh, *elected unanimously*.

## **7. Appointment of External Independent Examiner.**

Arthur Savage had agreed to continue in the role if necessary. He was proposed by Beryl Davies and seconded by Barbara Logan.

The Meeting closed at 2.50pm and was followed immediately by the  
Special General Meeting

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**Minutes of the SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING  
held in the Guildhall on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> April at 2.50pm.**

**Present.** A total of 30 members.

**1. Welcome and Introduction.**

Hilary Leigh introduced the meeting by reiterating the points made in the letter that was sent out with the AGM papers. She elaborated on the history, aims and achievements of The Friends of Guildford House, as well as the enjoyment the society had given to so many members over the years. However, at the AGM only one person had come forward and been elected on to the committee. No society could function without a viable committee, so the only option was the dissolution of the Friends of Guildford House – and hence this meeting.

**3. Financial Position.**

The Hon. Treasurer had dealt with this in the AGM. The net current assets were £18,870. According to the constitution if the society is dissolved, following the settlement of any costs involved, the assets would be transferred to charitable institutions with similar objectives to FoGH. A list would be placed at the back of the hall where members could express their ideas and preferences after the meeting.

**2. Proposal: the Dissolution of the Friends of Guildford House Charity.**

There were a number of queries and comments from the floor.

- a). Louise Greenfield asked what effect the dissolution of 'The Friends' would have on the running of Guildford House – would the shop remain open? Hilary Leigh explained that the Guildford House Gallery was run by GBC Heritage Services. We supported it financially by buying pictures, display units and helping with other costs. Louise congratulated the Committee for carrying on as long as possible running a wonderful Society with special thanks for all the outings.
- b). John Surrey, Hon Treasurer, pointed that 2023/24 paid up members were still members until the question of dissolution had been decided and thus entitled to vote.
- c). Carol Brown (no longer a member) was allowed to speak. She was very involved with the Museum and the Friends of the Museum and suggested a way forward might be an amalgamation of the two groups of Friends. However this was not possible as the Friends of the Museum was not a charity. She would discuss this problem with Nick Bale.
- d). Pauline Surrey compared the current situation with 2010, when Guildford House was threatened with closure and needed someone to fight for it. Carol Brown had the same worries about the Museum. It was suggested that a solution might be the formation of a new group, 'The Friends of Guildford Heritage' which would include all aspects of heritage in Guildford and could appeal to younger people. The meeting voiced general approval of this idea, so Hilary Leigh said that the Committee would contact the Museum and follow up the idea.

4.

e). Mary Broughton said that she had had dealings with the Charity Commission over the Sime Gallery and always found them very helpful.

#### **4. Voting by Secret Ballot.**

Proposal: the **Dissolution of the Friends of Guildford House** Charity.

Members were given printed Voting papers with three options:-

For the proposal. Against. Abstain.

Counting of the votes was overseen by John Surrey, who announced the result to the meeting.

Of the 30 members present, 24 voted for the proposal.

3 voted against.

2 abstained

and one paper was left blank.

#### **5. Future Action.**

The meeting voted unanimously for the present committee to stay on to wind up the Friends of Guildford House and/or amalgamate with the Museum, in some form, eg 'Friends of Guildford Heritage' and to distribute the assets of the Society in accordance with the Charity Commission's requirements.

Before the meeting finally closed, John Surrey presented the Acting Interim Chairman, Hilary Leigh, and the Hon. Secretary, Greta Willis, with bouquets and John Lewis tokens. He thanked Hilary for taking on the post of Interim Chairman, a job she had never wanted, at a difficult time and carrying it out so efficiently. He thanked Greta for her many years of service on the committee, including 13 years as Hon. Secretary.

The meeting closed at 3.25pm. Members then enjoyed tea and cakes before reassembling for a talk by Julie Verity entitled 'The Wild Gardener, William Robinson'.

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