

Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery and Wirral Museums

Registered Charity Number 514641

Minutes of Annual General Meeting 16th March 2017

In attendance: Alison Bailey Smith; Mary Compton-Rickett; Lesley Penn; Robert Elder; Jean Jones; David Brown; Gillian Porter; Paul Smith; Jane Horton; Pamela E Turner; Mike Studley; Jean Benfield; David Cowling; Kelsang Sonam Isuy; Patrick and Monica Toosey; Ann Bridge Davies; Sheila Low; Philip Penn; M. Elder; Rabindra Singh; Amrit Singh; Susan Brown; Patricia Arthur; Jennifer Baldwin; Jean Davies; Colin Davies; Lesley McGart; Corinne Whitham ; John Robertson; Elizabeth Davey; Julie McWilliam; Jenny Heywood; Tilly Wilkinson; David Kean; Maggie Gaskell; Naomi Horlock and Lawrence Holden.

Apologies: Polly Carter and Jerry Harris; Dr Rhys Roberts; Owen Roberts; Alasdair Roberts; Robert Wood; John Booth; Val Edwards; Sue Boardman; David Ainsley; D. Lane; Judith Wheat; Alan McGarrity; Rhiannon Evans; Steve Ferguson; Sue Ferguson and Philip Duffy.

Presentation

Lawrence Holden (LH) opened the meeting by introducing Peter Gommon (PG), a retired landscape architect and founding partner of Ainsley Gommon Architects, who gave an illustrated presentation on the proposed quad garden development as a flexible outdoor space. He explained that more fund-raising would be needed to achieve this vision, which would be an evolving one. Points raised included: a potential water feature, the maintenance implications for the scheme and the potential for volunteers to become involved in the same, the need for strong support to make the scheme a success and costings. Colin Simpson (CS) advised that the quad garden would be open when the Williamson was open, depending on the weather.

The presentation was enthusiastically received and a number of members indicated that they considered that the Green Gallery would provide an attractive additional amenity that would draw more visitors to the Gallery.

The Business of the AGM

LH explained that this was the final AGM of the old association. In future the committee would be looking for new Trustees, in particular an individual with fund-raising expertise and someone with a passion for the Priory. He introduced Mary Compton Rickett as the new Secretary of Williamson and Priory Friends.

1. **Apologies:** Ms. R Evans and Mr P. Duffy,
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 14th February 2016:** The minutes were approved.
3. **Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31st October 2016 :** LH thanked Alison Bailey Smith (ABS) and Jean Benfield (JB) for their work on the Annual Report. Jane Horton (JH) spoke to the accounts contained in the report, which formed the final accounts for the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery and Wirral Museums. She explained the need for members to cancel their standing orders into the old bank account for the Friends of the Williamson and create new standing orders to go into the Williamson and Priory Friends (W&PF) bank account. It was intended to use £10,000 of W&PF funds towards the quad garden scheme, of which £5,000 had already been donated. Several funding applications had been submitted for the quad garden development and other potential funding sources were being considered. LH proposed and JH seconded that the report and accounts be adopted. *The motion was approved.*

4. LH reported THAT pursuant to the RESOLUTION passed and the last Annual General Meeting held on 14 February 2016 :-
 - a. A New Charitable Incorporated Organisation 'Williamson and Priory Friends' had been formed and registered with the Charity Commission under number 1166363 on 5th April 2016.
 - b. All the assets and liabilities of the Association had been transferred to Williamson and Priory Friends
 - c. All the members of the Association had been admitted into membership of the new CIO
 - d. Williamson and Priory Friends had been operating since 1st November 2016 and that all the Committee members of the Association namely David Edwin Ainsley, Jean Linda Benfield, Patricia Margaret Foden, Lawrence Holden, Naomi Margaret Horlock, Jane Doreen Horton, Colin Mark Simpson, John Robert Southwood and Corinne Anne Witham had been appointed Trustees of Williamson and Priory Friends. Accordingly he proposed the following RESOLUTION- THAT IT BE CONFIRMED AND RESOLVED THAT THE ASSOCIATION BE WOUND UP UNDER RULE 11. This was seconded by Jean Benfield and carried unanimously.
5. **Report by Lawrence Holden as Chair of Williamson and Priory Friends on the work of the new CIO since 1st November 2016.** LH spoke about the division of the work of the Friends and introduced Corinne Witham(CW) who had responsibility for all Friends Activities.

CW reported on about the plans for Friends' activities in the coming year - including the summer serenades, talks, presentations, trips and visits, events, the summer art programme and private views. She spoke of the need to attend, bring friends to the activities and make a donation towards the costs incurred in putting them on, as well as encouraging others to attend activities/ events. It was hoped, in addition to these activities, to organise small group visits to local artists. The charging policy for activities related to the policy of being inclusive, so that people were not excluded from the Summer Serenades, private views and talks on the grounds of cost.

LH further reported on support for and liaison with the staff team at the Williamson and Priory and in particular that Colin Simpson was writing a strong vision for the service, which would be supported by the Friends

LH thanked ABS for her unique contribution, she had been nominated for the Tourism Star Award in Wirral's Tourism Awards.

He spoke to the need to raise funds to make exciting things happen at both the gallery and prior, three major grant applications were underway. The quad project, the initial cost for which would be between £35,000 and £40,000, had financial implications. The final cost of the project was likely to be around £60,000.

Pat Foden (PF) spoke about the 'grow the quad' fund-raising initiative and the need to spread the word about the quad garden project and the gallery and thus attract more visitors, more W&PF friends and more contributors, both practical and financial. She introduced the fund-raising 'vine', to which a hand-made leaf would be added whenever a donation was made. She spoke about the range of potential fund-raising opportunities.

ABS reported that in the last year she had encouraged external exhibitors to pay for the design of flyers by herself.

**6. Address by Colin Simpson - Principal Museums Officer Wirral MBC
Museums Service:**

CS explained that from 2020 councils would no longer receive any funding from central government. The external consultants' report on the future structure of the council would be published on the council website on 17th March. He had attended a 'Future-proof Museums' course, which had highlighted the need (in such fast changing, uncertain times) to decide on a destination rather than a fixed route to that destination. CS thanked the Friends, on behalf of the staff team, for their support. The service was run 'by the skin of our teeth'. A major project for the future was the need to tell the maritime story, given the local history. Since New Year visitor numbers had increased. The next exhibition would be the Open Exhibition. CS spoke of the vital connection to the local area and the local arts scene, the gallery had been designed to sit in the heart of the Birkenhead community. The Priory, the oldest standing building of the Merseyside Community had been at the heart of the community for almost 1,000 years. He advised that 80 per cent of the Williamson collection was local i.e. either by local artists or of local subjects and asked Friends to encourage more people to visit the gallery and Priory as the more people that came, the greater would be the difficulty in shutting them down.

7. Any other business capable of being transacted at a General Meeting of which notice has been given: None was raised.