

WEYBRIDGE SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held at St James's Parish Church Hall at 8pm on Thursday 4th April 2019.



The Chairman, Dave Arnold, opened the meeting by **welcoming** over 100 members and guests and particularly welcomed two Surrey County Council and six Elmbridge Borough Councillors present.

Apologies for absence were received from Helen Mills, Mervyn and Linda Greig, Peter and Brenda Vey, Reverend Brian Prothero, Roger Manning, David and Carla Bounds, Trevor and Trudi Lewis and John Righton.

Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on the 12th April 2018 was proposed by Trevor Tarring, seconded by Margaret Wickes, and carried unanimously.

Dave Arnold presented **Trustees' Annual Report for 2018** (copy attached). Acceptance of this report was proposed by Elvira Spary, seconded by Elisabeth Vevers, and carried unanimously.

Election of Trustees. The Chairman reported that four of the current Trustees – Dave Arnold, Richard Marshall, Nick Thripp, and Raymond Spary had confirmed their willingness to continue in office. The fifth trustee Barry Judd had, as required by the constitution, stood down and was willing to stand for re-election. His re-appointment was proposed by Jon Tait and seconded by Eric Hammond, and carried unanimously. The Chairman also paid tribute to John Hanafin a former trustee who sadly had died since the last meeting.

The **Chairman** then proceeded to present his **Report** (copy attached) with a short review of key activities. He thanked the various members who had helped run the Society during the past year and emphasised that new helpers would be very welcome, especially younger ones. He summarised progress with the proposals made last year to explore the rare opportunity to combine Council and NHS services on publicly-owned land in the Town Centre (the Weybridge Rebuild and Advance Project, WRAP), and then introduced presentations by others on the Committee:--

- **Steve McCarthy** spoke about both **the Membership Database and the Website**, and demonstrated how this worked as a community resource. Since the last AGM, the Society had gained 150 new members but had lost contact with several older members. The Website was now tidier, more up to date and compatible with smart 'phones and tablets (of particular benefit to the younger generation).
- **Lesia Scholey, editor of the Newsletter**, spoke about the need to keep the public informed about planning and other changes, and to report things to be proud about in Weybridge. She also emphasised how easy it is to volunteer in the Society.
- **Raymond Spary spoke about the Planning Panel**, and described how it reviewed developers' proposals before expressing views to Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC). EBC had from Government a requirement to find new housing sites in built areas. Proposals should be made as good as possible and meet the various kinds of need. He updated members on seven significant proposals previously reported both in the Newsletter and in the Chairman's full report. Some of these are now under appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Councillors constantly have difficult judgements to make and some proposals return with improvements after initial rejection, but a few get approved quickly with regrettable consequences. We look at the level of objections from the public shown on EBC's website before making a comment. In the Conservation Areas we liaise with the Advisory Committee. Parking spaces per dwelling are a particularly contentious issue, because levels of car-dependency are high in Weybridge. He expressed a special thanks to the members of the Panel for their dedication and hard work. He said new members were welcome to join the panel and could quickly learn the main issues.
- **Andy Richardson, as new Treasurer, presented the accounts for 2018. These were approved unanimously by the members** (after approval was proposed by Andrew Davis and seconded by Ann Lindsay). After having had to learn his new role, he explained the figures in detail and also

mentioned that the newsletter cost was about to benefit from some advertising revenue, and there was also some gift-aid now due.

At this point several members arrived at this meeting after emerging from the Allotment Society AGM.

Election of Accounts Examiner for 2019. The Chairman thanked Jon Tait for his thorough examination of the 2018 Accounts and confirmed that Jon was willing to continue in the post for 2019. This proposal was carried unanimously.

Election of Executive Committee. There were no new nominations. Those willing to continue on the Committee were Dave Arnold, Barry Judd, Raymond Spary, Andy Richardson, Anne Lindsay, Richard Marshall, Steve McCarthy, Trevor Lewis, Lesia Scholey and Mervyn Greig, and these were all re-elected “en bloc” after being proposed by Margaret Wickes and seconded by Robin Sutton.

The Chairman next spoke about the current year. He mentioned discussions with two Councillors about forming a Neighbourhood Plan. Under the Localism Act of 2011 this would require a committee of 21, and would be a way to let the public have a stronger say in how development is managed locally. However, creating such a plan for all areas is onerous and there may be simpler ways to form a vision for Weybridge. In the meantime EBC’s Local Plan will be issued for public consultation in July. The WRAP proposals in the Town Centre have been offered £100K from the Government’s One Public Estate Fund, and in the current Newsletter there are four pages about the various schemes, including the High Street and social housing. Lesia Scholey is hoping to get help with more communication on social media. Three dates were noted for events this summer. An events organiser and a secretary position are still vacant and volunteers would be welcome. From the floor, there was encouragement expressed by Luke Vincent for creating a vision to build and enhance the community in Weybridge, especially for young mothers. EBC Councillor Ian Donaldson spoke to encourage public support for Weybridge in Bloom and general tidying of streets.

At 9.30 pm there was then a presentation from **Tim Oliver, new leader of Surrey County Council who represents Weybridge and is also an Elmbridge Borough Councillor**. He mentioned three challenges for the town as: - housing affordability, changing demographics, and the attraction and retention of business and talent. He said there are 24K residents, 10K households and an average house price of £760K, with 38% of residents commuting to London. He mentioned the Council’s strategic investment in ‘the Weybridge Estate’ opposite the Queens Head pub. and the creation of 5 new flats above Weybridge Hall, though the Hall’s future use as a cinema is uncertain. On the Hospital site the Clinical Commissioning Group would decide later in the year between an urgent treatment centre or a ‘supercharged GP centre’. Town centre streetscape and phasing of lights were under way, while the top of Baker Street is a danger still to be solved. Brooklands was to be accessed by a cycle path, and the Queens Rd/Hanger Hill ‘Triangle’ are to be made safer. He took questions about fallen trees, SCC and EBC parking standards, and said he had taken highways officers at school time to see the situation at Beales Lane where more flats are proposed. In general he much welcomed the opportunities for partnership with the public, and was keen on a creating a new vision for Weybridge, and on ensuring that developments are popular and in the right places. He reported on progress with resurfacing roads since last year. Finally he addressed a strong protest from a member about the well-known dangers for pedestrians at the station roundabout.

There being no further business, and with due thanks to Tim and to all present, the Chairman closed the meeting at 10pm.

Richard Marshall 5.4.19