

## THE STRATFORD UPON AVON SOCIETY

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 13th May 2013

The President, Sir Brian Follett, opened the meeting by paying tribute to Bill McFarland and Leon Tanner, who had died during the year. They had played a major role in the Society – Bill through his legal expertise and inside knowledge of the local authority and Leon by fighting many planning battles and providing authoritative architectural advice which ensured that the Society's voice was heard and respected. They were a great loss.

**Apologies:** Joyce Bridges; Julie Crawshaw, Judith Fogg, Ian Fradgley, Mary Hoare, James Holloway, John Scampion, Brian Wright, Nadhim Zahawi.

**Minutes** of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday, 5th March 2012 were approved.

**Chairman's Report:** Dr Kevin Bond began his report by noting that the Society's highly regarded Historic Spine project to improve the route from the Birthplace to Holy Trinity could not succeed if the relationship between traffic and pedestrians was not properly balanced. That included the regulation of loading and unloading, coach traffic and parking which were currently being addressed and were the beginning of creating a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The vibrancy of Henley Street when traffic was restricted during certain limited hours showed how workable the concept of sharing the streets between pedestrians and traffic could be.

In addition, the Society had been instrumental in persuading SDC to offer grants to owners wishing to improve their shop fronts. This included free architectural advice on restoring the balance between the upper floors and the shop windows which often obscured the historic lines of the buildings.

The programme for the year had been particularly successful and the chairman complimented Jean Clymer for arranging a series of excellent speakers and interesting visits. Jean would be standing down from her position as Programme Secretary at the end of the 2013/14 season. She would be happy to work with a prospective Programme Secretary during that time.

Referring to his recently publicised criticism of SDC's lack of planning policy, the chairman said that its failure to produce a Core Strategy on time meant that a number of inappropriate developments were likely in and around the town. It was up to the Society to work with SDC to limit any possible damage. The forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan was the community's opportunity to express its views, but what the legal status of such plans would be in the absence of a Core Strategy had not yet been tested in the courts.

He concluded by saying attention should be paid to relatively minor matters as well as major developments, citing the ill-conceived finish to parts of the RST. The Society should not compromise and its duty was to be the conscience of all local developers.

In answer to questions from the floor the chairman said

- Regular meetings with the planners had been restored and were held quarterly.
- The preponderance of District councillors with no allegiance to Stratford was to be regretted, as without a vibrant and successful town, the District would suffer and giving more consideration to Stratford's needs would pay wider dividends.
- The one-week experiment of closing High Street to traffic was now unlikely, but the Historic Spine Working Group was examining other possible methods of traffic calming to make the environment for pedestrians safer and more attractive.

The chairman concluded by thanking all members of the General Committee and the various working groups for their valuable input and support.

**Hon Treasurer's Report:** As the Treasurer who had prepared the accounts had resigned, the President presented the report. He noted that:

- The finances of the Society were broadly the same as in previous years.
- Income had increased temporarily as the result of grants from the Town Trust (Historic Spine guide) and SDC (shop fronts) which had subsequently been spent on these projects.
- Reserves of £9,586 showed a drop of £676 against the previous year, but were sufficient to meet foreseeable eventualities.

**Trustees' Report and Accounts 2012:** The full report had been circulated to members. It included all Group Reports which were taken as read. The President commented on the considerable amount of work that had been done by the various groups which had resulted in very positive achievements. The adoption of the Report and Accounts for 2012 was proposed by Ian Prosser, seconded by Peter Burgess and agreed.

**Appointment of Independent Examiner:** The reappointment of Guard D'Oyly as the Society's Independent Examiner for 2013 was proposed by Geoffrey Lees, seconded by Ian Prosser and agreed.

**Election of Officers:** The following officers were unanimously elected for the period 2013-2016: Hon. Treasurer: Jon Craig, Hon. Secretary: Paul Mackey, Vice-chairman: John Scampion.

**Election of General Committee Members:** Peter Burgess, John Deegan, Beryl Downing and Robin Sankey were unanimously elected to serve on the General Committee for the period 2013-2016.

**AOB:** None

**Next meeting:** The next annual general meeting of the Society will be held on **Monday 12th May 2014.**