

2013 Annual General Meeting

The fourth AGM was hosted by Merseyside Civic Society 26th October 2013

Minutes

The fourth AGM was attended by 121 people and 51 civic societies (49 members of Civic Voice).

1. Welcome

Councillor Gary Millar, Lord Mayor of Liverpool opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to Liverpool before handing over to Paula Ridley (Chair, Civic Voice). Paula welcomed delegates and thanked the Lord Mayor for his entertaining and interesting opening remarks.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alnwick Civic Society, Bath Preservation Trust, Berwick Upon Tweed Civic Society, Bournemouth Society Caldys Society, Chelmsford Society, Dorchester Civic Trust, Gidea Park & District Civic Society, Hartlepool Civic Society, Hereford Civic Society, Laura Sandys MP, Lechlade and District Civic Society, Mitcham Cricket Green and Community Heritage, Ripon Society, , Scarborough Civic Society, The Petersfield Society, Torbay Society, West Derby Society, Wigan Civic Trust and 25 individual members

3. Minutes of 2012 AGM, Coventry

The minutes of the meeting of the 2012 AGM were proposed by Fleet and Church Crookham Society and seconded by Oxford Civic Society and signed by the chair as a true record.

4. Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13 Chair's Presentation

Paula Ridley introduced the Trustees' report and accounts and reflected on the increasing impact of and Civic Voice and member civic societies and the work undertaken during the past year.

It was reported that this was to be Paula's final AGM as Chair of Civic Voice. She referred to her time as Chair and the changes that had taken place since inception of the organisation in April 2010. The values which have informed the work of Civic Voice - grass roots action, transparency and tenacity, have been constant watchwords.

Civic Voice's membership now numbers 290 civic societies with 75,000 members supported by a staff of 1.5. As a national organisation Civic Voice is the glue which bonds all Civic Society member societies. Paula reflected on the array of activities undertaken by Civic Voice – campaigning, policy, communications, public relations, press, media and social networking, fundraising, budget management, event delivery and member liaison and administration. Paula affirmed that the vital work delivered by Civic Voice on behalf of its membership is not something that could be carried out solely by volunteers.

Reflecting on her time as Chair, Paula recounted the many achievements including:

- Building the movement and membership;
- Raising the profile of the civic movement and Civic Voice through consistent media and social networking activity
- greatly supported by the efforts and significant contribution of Griff Rhys Jones, president of Civic Voice;
- Establishing the Civic Panel;
- Improving and increasing communication with the membership;

- Establishing Civic Surveys; and

Becoming a campaigning force with increasing influence in the national arena. In the past twelve months alone there had been successful campaigning on the Government's proposed amendments to the permitted development legislation, which would have allowed large extensions (up to 26m) to be built without the need for planning approval. #

Following the decision of delegates at last year's AGM, who voted unanimously to back a motion calling on the Government to withdraw its proposed reforms, the subsequent, highly successful campaign waged by Civic Voice and its members had helped to force the Government to significantly modify its original planned legislative changes. Other successes included the completion of the Protect our Place project; activity to highlight and advance the debate on the continuing decline in the fortunes of our High Streets; another successful delivery of Heritage Open Day; significant funding bids made in respect of projects around Local Listing and war memorials' heritage; and not least, thanks to the tireless efforts of members, 69 MPs had now signed up as members of the Civic Voice All Party Parliamentary Group. Paula called upon all civic societies whose MP had not yet signed up to write and encourage them to join.

Regarding Local Listing, the meeting target of 2015 buildings to be locally listed by 2015. Paula paid particular thanks to the Trustees, staff and past directors for the support they had offered during her time as Chair, including Tony Burton and Steve Graham. She paid tribute to the President, Griff Rhys Jones who, Paula said, had demonstrated by his actions that he speaks from the heart, practises what he preaches and is an unstinting advocate for Civic Voice and the civic movement. Paula also paid tribute to Ian Harvey who is now assisted by Gill Roxborough. Ian had demonstrated consistent good judgment and tireless work and effort on behalf of Civic Voice and the members, spearheading an organisation that punches above its weight. Ian was an individual who shows his heart is truly in it and members showed their agreement and appreciation by giving Ian a spontaneous round of applause.

Finally, Paula said that, above all, it was the commitment of the membership of civic societies across the country that has brought the civic movement and Civic Voice to its present consolidated position. She was optimistic for the future and placed on record her thanks to all civic societies for their laudable enthusiasm and dedication to the civic movement cause.

Treasurer's Report

Martin Meredith introduced the 2012-13 accounts. Martin outlined the key features of the year's accounts and added that, as funding from DCLG and Esmee Fairburn had now ended, additional sources of grant funding were actively being sought.

Referring to salary and staff costs, Martin informed the meeting that, as these had totalled twice the income generated by membership subscriptions, the decision had been made by the Board of Trustees to delete the post of Director, which would lead to savings of £68,000 in 2014.

Economies had also been achieved by an office relocation and IT software back office modifications.

5. Ratification of Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13

Oxford Civic Trust proposed and Chelsea Society seconded the ratification of the Trustees' report and accounts for 2012-13.

6. Appointment of Independent Examiners

The appointment of Hargreaves and Woods as Independent Examiners were proposed by Retford Civic Society and seconded by High Wycombe Civic Society.

7. Board Elections – Announcement of Results

Paula Ridley announced the results of the ballot for Trustees to join the Board and welcomed John Walker (Kent Civic Society) and Dave Tittle (Coventry Civic Society) to the Board and thanked all those who had participated.

8. Special Resolution 3 – amendments to the Civic Voice Articles of Association.

An amendment to the proposals was put before the meeting by Paul Meek and seconded by Tony Fooks to set up a working group to review the amendments currently on the table. The amendment was put to the vote and was defeated with three members voting in favour and the majority voting against the proposed amendment. The substantive motion to amend the Articles of Association was therefore carried.

9. Ratification of Chair and Treasurer

Freddie Gick informed the meeting that he had accepted co-option to the Board on the basis that he would be the incoming chair of Civic Voice.

Freddie outlined his objectives for Civic Voice, which were to lead the Board in its key roles of: - Providing influence nationally; Supporting all civic societies and Ensuring Civic Voice has resources sufficient to build a sustainable organisation.

Responding to Judith Talbot, who wished to see the minutes of the Board reported more fully to the membership, Freddie advised that he would welcome and be receptive to any changes that would help enhance the way business was managed on behalf of the membership.

High Wycombe Civic Society proposed the ratification of Freddie Gick as Chair and Martin Meredith as Treasurer which was seconded by Hale Civic Society and accepted unanimously by the Meeting.

There was no further AGM business.

10. Any other business

Paula Ridley introduced Jo Winyard from Marsh Christian Trust and announced the results of the second Marsh Christian Trust Civic Awards for “outstanding contribution” as follows:

Marsh Civic Society Award Winner: Ramsgate Civic Society

Marsh Civic Volunteer Award Winner: Kevin Trickett (Wakefield Civic Trust)

Paula thanked Jo Winyard and Marsh Christian Trust for their support.

The minutes were proposed by the Coventry Society and seconded by Oxford Civic Society at the Civic Voice AGM in Canterbury on October 25th 2014