

MINUTES...

64th NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Speaking for Scotland's Buildings

29 October 2020, 6.00pm BY VIDEO CONFERENCE ON ZOOM

Present: Simon Green (SG) (President), Martin Robertson (MR) (Chair), Caroline Roussot (CR) (Treasurer), John Beaton, Jonathan Best, Annette Carruthers, Alastair Cook, Jocelyn Cunliffe, Alastair Dalton, Alastair Disley, Mitchell Fotheringham, Samuel Gallacher, Elizabeth Graham, Yvonne Hillyard, Neil & Rosie Hooper, Anina Hutton, Iain Jolliffe, Andrew Kerr, Shabnam Komai-koma, Elaine Kuwahara, Ann Laird, Jilly MacLeod, Rosemary Mann, John & Ruth McDowell, Caroline & Charles McFarlane, Hamish McPherson, Abigail Morris, Elizabeth Paliga, Tom Parnell, Shaheera Pesnani, Morag Pettigrew, Andrew Rodger, Emmanuel Roussot, Barbara Simpson and Iain Wotherspoon.
Lena Sideri taking minutes.

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Michael Atkinson, Bill Brogden, John Knight, Peter Ranson, Iona Roberts, Lord & Lady Stewart and Richard Wildash.

2. Approval of Minutes of the 63rd AGM held on 19 October 2019 at Perth Cathedral, St. Ninian's at 12.00pm

Accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. President's Address

The President thanked all the volunteers who give their time and energy to support our wide variety of activities: the National Committee, chaired by Martin Robertson for providing direction, Lena Sideri, our administrator; Caroline Roussot, our Treasurer who plays an crucial role in managing our finances; the Group Chairmen and our Cases Panel who continue to work tirelessly commenting on the wide variety of applications that we deal with throughout the country and, Abigail Daly for her editorship of our magazine which provides a wonderful insight into the work of the Society and covers a wide variety of pertinent issues.

SG spoke about the decision of the appeal made by the Duddingston House Properties and Urbanist Hotels against the decision by City of Edinburgh Council which was refused and gratefully thanked our AHSS members, for their continuing support.

4. Chairman's Report

MR noted that **the year we are reporting** on was almost entirely pre-Covid with the Society, National Office and regions functioning normally and successfully, with all the talks, visits and casework going on as usual. We were preparing for the conference with Historic Environment Scotland, which was to be held in Stirling in April on the very important subject on the future of Conservation Areas in Scotland, and taking preliminary steps towards planning a conference on the impact of increased tourism on the historic environment, in conjunction with the Scottish Civic Trust, Built Environment Forum Scotland, the Cockburn Association, and Edinburgh World Heritage. We joined the world wide Climate Heritage Network and formulated a new Environmental Policy for the Society to cut our carbon footprint for the future. And we waited in hope for the Scottish Government to decide on the future of the former Royal High School. In March, all of this came to an abrupt stop. The National Study Tour was cancelled, visits, and indoor meetings, became impossible. The proposed conference on Conservation Areas was postponed perhaps to 2021, and that of Tourism maybe to the year after. Despite Covid, **during the current year 2020 to 2021**, the work of the Society has continued. We have been busy, and we have managed surprisingly well. The Council and the various Committees have continued to meet as regularly as before, on Zoom. The work of the Cases Panels has continued and has been nearly as busy as before. Forth & Borders and Strathclyde Groups are now running their winter lecture series entirely online. **Going forward**, the Society must build on its new ability to reach far-flung parts virtually, both to involve our distant members in a closer relationship with the centre and to encourage new

MINUTES...

NATIONAL COUNCIL

membership. Meanwhile, the Scottish Government's decision on the future use of the former Edinburgh Royal High School is a clear indication of the vital role that the AHSS can play in protecting the built heritage in Scotland. The result may not be final, but it is nevertheless to be celebrated for the important contribution the AHSS has made in achieving this, and we still feel very proud of what we've done.

5. Treasurer's report on year ended 31 March 2020

CR reported that the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 were approved by the Directors and were filed at Companies House in September. In these accounts, the only area impacted by Covid-19 is investment valuations due to stock market turbulence during the last month of the financial year ending 2020, with a loss of £25,000.

The other headline of the year was the drawing of a line under the Royal High School campaign, in that our fundraising raised £25,000 and brought our total income on the campaign into line with our expenditure.

In the current year, subscription and investment income are down a bit; no profit will arise on the cancelled study tour to Angus. Magazine and Cases Panels support expenditure is expected to be stable. We have no expectation that anything will be awarded in our costs application against Duddingston and Urbanist Hotels, and in any case this was in relation to a small and very limited issue.

On the admin side, work progresses on record digitisation. Subscription payment methods have been updated, and renewals by method other than cheque have risen to 50%.

It is anticipated that the accounts for the year to 31 March 2021 will show a similar 'break-even' position to last year, subject to investment movement.

Brewin Dolphin have conducted their portfolio review. The Trustees are in the process of agreeing on an investment policy statement, intending to complete the transfer to new arrangements in the coming months.

Questions on investments: Jilly MacLeod inquired about the progress on the ethical investments matter. The Treasurer responded that this would be defined in the investment policy parameters specified by the Trustees and Brewin Dolphin will be instructed accordingly.

6. Ordinary resolution: vote: "that Messrs Henderson Loggie be re-appointed as Independent Examiners for the year to 31 March 2021"

Approved

7. AOCB

SG directed attendees to [the AHSS website](#) to read the Regional Group Reports.

The President thanked everyone for attending the 64th Annual General Meeting of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and for all the hard work that makes the AHSS thrive even in these particularly trying times.

The meeting ended at 6.43pm