



**Minutes of the
Annual General Meeting
21 October 2009
Chichester**

Present:

Christopher Allen	Huntingdonshire DC	Ian Heggie	Stratford-upon-Avon Society
Melbourne Barrett	Oxford CC		
Kim Bennett	Canterbury CC	Sam Howes	Chichester DC / HTF Chair
Jim Backwell	Worcester CC		
Steve Carvell	Chichester DC	Alan Legg	Tunbridge Wells BC
Sean Coghlan	Lichfield DC	Judith Martin	City of Winchester Trust
Deborah Dance	Oxford Preservation Trust / HTF Chair Designate	Keith Ray	Herefordshire Council
		Peter Robinson	Manogue Architects
Kate Dickson	Heritage Works	Richard Tuffrey	High Peak BC
Nigel Green	Consultant	Chris Winter	HTF
Chris Hargreaves	Birmingham CC	John Wrightson	Worcester CC
		Tony Wyatt	_space group

1. Apologies

Received from:

Steve Bee, English Heritage

James & Vanessa Gregory

Phil Godwin, North Norfolk D C

Nick Hayward, RPS

Brian Human

Cllr Hilary Nelson, North Norfolk D C

Mike Loveday, HEART

Andrea Pellegram

Ian Poole, St Edmundsbury BC

John Preston, Cambridge CC

Prue Smith

Steve Tilbury, Winchester City Council

2. Minutes of the meeting held at Lichfield on 8 October 2008

Agreed.

3. Matters Arising

5.a. Chairman, Sam Howes, commented that, with the support of the last Meeting, the additional category of Town and Parish Councils had been created.

4. Presentation of the Annual Report

4.1 Chairman, Sam Howes, believed that "all things considered" the organisation was in "good shape". The recession was impacting in several ways on the Forum, which was compounded by the move to Unitary Authorities, reducing the number of potential Members. He thanked the Director and her team for putting in place measures which had gone some way to mitigate the financial situation. TW added his congratulations for gaining the contract with English Heritage which was critical at this time. CW thanked BH for his part in this.

4.2 The Director, Chris Winter, talked through the Report emphasising the changes to practice which had been put in place to limit costs and maximise income. These included the move to electronic communications replacing paper newsletters and conference brochures, and the development of web-based guidance for the current projects. Costs of events had been cut, whilst retaining professional delivery, and she was grateful for the support and sponsorship which had been received for these. She gave a brief update regarding the inclusion of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, as well as other current partnership projects.

4.3 The Honorary Treasurer, Richard Tuffrey presented the Financial Report appended to the main Report, and expanded on the difficulties faced by the Forum. He explained that a specially convened

meeting of the Officers had agreed a strategy, of which the delivery of the Conservation Areas At Risk (CAAR) seminars on behalf of English Heritage was a crucial part. He was confident that with careful management and focus, using the skills and resources within the organisation, the current deficit could be turned around.

SH added that in the current circumstances, the Forum had felt it necessary to withdraw from membership of the European Association of Historic Towns & Regions (EAHTR) although he hoped to continue to work together.

Both SH and RT called for Members' support and their encouragement of Councillor participation – especially for the CAAR seminars and Membership renewal in January 2010.

5. Motions before the meeting:

5.1 *That the AGM notes and endorses the change of name from English Historic Towns Forum to Historic Towns Forum, and the consequent change of logo.*

Noted and agreed.

5.2 *That the AGM supports the following change (in bold) to the wording of the Constitution at para 5:*

The officers of the Forum are:

- *Chair*
- *Vice Chairs (2)*
- *Honorary Treasurer*

*Officers of the Forum will normally be full-time employed staff of local authority members. If the circumstances dictate, the AGM may elect as Chair / Vice Chair an ex-local authority employee of appropriate experience and standing and not currently employed full time by a commercial organisation, **or a suitably experienced and senior individual from a commercial organisation in a field of activity related to the HTF's work and who, in the opinion of the Executive does not, through that individual's continuing commercial activities, have any conflict of interest with the HTF's objectives***

In the event that the Executive Committee considered that the Chair should receive an honorarium or expenses this will be included in the nomination details to be considered and voted on by the AGM.

Discussion followed regarding the appropriate wording. It was agreed that the references to any conflict of interest should apply equally to LA officers as well as officers from the private sector. Other suggestions were that the references to "commercial" be removed and that the revised wording to be considered by the Executive on behalf of the AGM be as follows:

Officers of the Forum will normally be full-time employed staff of local authority members. If the circumstances dictate, the AGM may elect as Chair / Vice Chair an ex-local authority employee of appropriate experience and standing, or a suitably experienced and senior individual from an organisation in a field of activity related to the HTF's work. Officers on the Executive should not have any conflict of interest with the HTF's objectives.

5.3 *That the AGM endorses the introduction of a new category of membership - Town & Parish Councils.*

Agreed.

5.4 *That, in view of the current economic climate the AGM considers and agrees whether or not to increase membership fees for the coming year and (if appropriate) at what level.*

CW presented figures which demonstrated the potential financial impacts of this decision – from no increase to a 5% across the board increase. Discussion followed regarding the pros and cons which centred on:

- the limited impact *per member* compared with the collective impact on the Forum;

- the sensitivity of Members to any increases in costs in the current financial climate;
- the positive PR to be gained from making a gesture by fixing fees for year.

The discussion was not decisive therefore the Chair called for a show of hands.
A motion to fix the fees for the coming year was carried 7:5.

5.5 From the floor, there was a request that financial projections for the coming year should be included in the report to the AGM in future, which was noted.

6. Election of Executive Committee members

6.1 The nominations received were presented by the Chair. There were no more from the floor, and he asked for the Meeting's agreement to the following:

Melbourne Barrett	Oxford CC
Steve Carvell	Chichester DC
Sean Coghlan	Lichfield DC
Andrew Dobson	Lancaster CC
Chris Hargreaves	Birmingham CC
Nick Hayward	RPS
Brian Human	BRH Assoc
Stephen Langtree	North West Civic Trust
Ian Poole	Bury St Edmunds BC
Steve Tilbury	Winchester CC
Richard Tuffrey	High Peak BC
John Wrightson	Worcester CC
Tony Wyatt	Space Group

A number would also be co-opted:

Steve Bee	English Heritage
David Humphreys	Independent
Mike Loveday	Living Streets / HEART
Andrea Pellegram	Independent
John Preston	Cambridge CC
Brian Smith	EAHTR
Prue Smith	Independent

The Meeting agreed.

6.2 Appointment of the Chair

SH reminded Members of the 2008 AGM's agreement that the Executive Committee should have delegated authority to appoint a Chair. After an appropriate selection process Debbie Dance had been appointed to succeed him following the Annual Conference. He welcomed her and invited her to address the meeting.

DD briefly explained her background, notably a qualified surveyor, with conservation credentials; currently Director of the Oxford Preservation Trust; and probably best known for her role in the Oxford Castle Project. She hoped that with her experience working with all sectors and in key positions in a range of organisations she would be able to help to carry the Forum forward.

7. Sponsors' Reports

There were no reports.

8. AOB

There was no other business but SH, as outgoing Chair – for the second time – said how much he had enjoyed his association with the Forum and wished everyone well for the future.