Stourbridge Old Edwardian Club

Minutes of the 123rd Annual General Meeting Held via ZOOM on Monday 7th December 2020 at 8pm

1. Apologies

Stuart Edwards, Jim Higgs, David Higgs, David Johnson, Ken Meredith, Rachael Minter, Terry Richards.

2. Act of Remembrance

Before commencement of the formal proceedings, the President recorded, with regret, those who had died during the period since the previous AGM. Sadly, Past Presidents Gwynne Bellis and Alan Cutler both passed away. Others we have lost included Barry Haynes, Keith Henwood, David Emery, and Tony Wilkes. Members observed a one-minute silence as a mark of remembrance and respect.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, held on Monday 2nd December 2019, had been made available on the website for more than 1 week and it was proposed they should be taken as read.

Proposer: Brian Arch Seconder: David Trewin

The duly proposed and seconded motion that the Minutes should be approved and signed, in confirmation by the President, was carried. The President accordingly signed the 2019 AGM minutes.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arose.

5. Annual Report and Financial Statements

The Annual Report and the Financial Statements for the year ended September 2020, as circulated to all members within the Annual Report, were tabled.

The Financial Statements and Annual Report were duly accepted.

Proposer: Martyn Price Seconder: Paul Thatcher

6. Appointment of President for the Ensuing Year

President Rob Hill said:

“At this time last year having been elected President, I looked forward with anticipation to the year ahead of me. Little did I realise what an unusual year it was to be. The Coronavirus has indeed left its mark on all of us in one way or another and like many businesses your Club has suffered as a result, with many normal events having to be postponed or cancelled.

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However, I have to say I have very much enjoyed my year as President and the challenges we have all faced in guiding the Club through these difficult times. I would like to thank all members of the General Committee for their help and support particularly in adapting to Committee Meetings via Zoom so that we could continue to discuss the business of the Club.

It is now my great pleasure to pass the mantle to my successor, who I am sure will prove to be a tremendous success in promoting the Club and guiding it from the difficulties of Covid to a brighter future, and I give him my best wishes for the coming year".

The President then passed control of the meeting to the new President, Robin Morrison

Robin Morrison, now as the new President, congratulated Rob Hill on his most successful year and excellent work and thanked him for his personal guidance. He looked forward to working with the Committee next year and was honoured to take up the position.

He thanked Rob Hill for his Presidential year and his perseverance despite the cancellation of functions. He said we would hold some of the postponed functions next year and have two of some functions such as President's evening.

7. Appointment of Vice-President

New President Robin Morrison President announced the candidate for this year:

1961–1966 King Edward VI Grammar School, Stourbridge.

Member of Kings House

He represented the school at cricket at all levels and successfully captained Kings House in a cricket knockout cup final.

After leaving school he worked in the Civil Service before finding his niche (finance) and joining South Staffordshire Building Society in 1973. He became the first Branch Manager of the newly opened office in Lye in 1977and was later promoted to manage a larger branch in Brierley Hill.

In 1982 he and his then wife Margaret moved to North Devon and bought a 13 bedroomed hotel in Ilfracombe which they ran successfully for 8 years before returning to the Midlands and the Staffordshire Building Society where he was branch manager. In subsequent years he was a financial consultant, mortgage broker and an administrator for insolvency companies.

He is one of our "Trench Raiders" and enjoys entertaining the public and raising money for mainly military charities.

His daughter Emily lives in Oban, Scotland where she gained her BSc.in Marine Science with Arctic Studies and graduated from the Norwegian University of Science & Technology in Trondheim where she gained her MSc. in Environmental Toxicology.

He is, again, our immediate past president Robert Hill!

President Robin welcomed Rob Hill as the coming year's Vice President and welcomed him back after a very short retirement!

Immediate Past President Rob Hill said the "white smoke committee" approached him and suggested that he should become President again due to his strange Presidential year. He looks forward to it.

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8. Appointment of Officers and Committee

The new President announced the nominations for appointment as Officers and nominations in respect of General Committee members seeking re-election following retirement by rotation. All had been proposed and seconded more than 7 days before the meeting and this appears on the AGM section of the website.

No other nominations had been received for the Officer or General Committee places. Therefore, no ballot was required in accordance with the Bylaws and the President declared that all of the nominees were duly appointed or reappointed as applicable:

Hon. Treasurer: David Burrows; Hon. Secretary: Alan Roden; Hon. Membership Secretary: John Brown. Committee members retiring by 3- year rotation and re-elected were Brian Arch, Paul Thatcher and Kenneth Wright.

Jem Norris (Chair of Bar and Social Sub-Committee) stood down from the Committee after 30 years of selfless dedication to the Club but we are delighted that his considerable expertise will still be available to us.

9. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

Messrs Folkes Worton LLP, Chartered Accountants, were appointed as Honorary Auditor for the period ending on the date of the next general meeting at which accounts are laid before the Club.

Proposer: David Trewin Seconder: Rob Hill

10. Appointment of Honorary Solicitor

Mr Peter Waldron was appointed as Honorary Solicitor for the period ending on the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

Proposer: David Burrows Seconder: Clive Bowen-Davies

11. Vote of Thanks

Graham Wood proposed the vote of thanks:

“On behalf of the members it gives me great pleasure to propose the vote of thanks to the committee for all their hard-work over the last twelve months.

2020 will surely go down as one of the most challenging years the club has had to face since the Second World War. Who would have thought as we assembled for last year’s AGM what global catastrophe was about to engulf us? Covid has ripped through all parts of the world and, to date has resulted in over 1.5m deaths worldwide with 60,000 of those in the UK. In order to combat the virus almost all governments have introduced draconian social and economic measures, which have impacted massively on all our lives and livelihoods.

It is against this backdrop that Rob Hill and his team have had to operate; and how well they have risen to the challenge!

Earlier in the meeting we heard how various measures were speedily implemented to ensure compliance with the plethora of rules and regulations emanating from government. Changes to the layout of the club room; the introduction of one-way systems; the erection of safety barriers; the provision of hand sanitizers; the installation of special windows; the monitoring of members’ access and egress, etc., etc. - need I go on?

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This has been an immense managerial and logistical exercise and members owe a massive debt of gratitude to all concerned. I'm reluctant to single out particular members of the committee, as it has truly been an excellent team effort.

However, I must just mention the President Rob Hill for the calm, collected and thoughtful way in which he has gone about his presidential year; the Secretary Alan Roden for continuing to put in a massive shift for the club in his own inimitable way; the Treasurer David Burrows for his excellent stewardship of the finances -turning a profit in these straitened times must surely go down as something of a minor miracle; and the Membership Secretary John Brown for his painstaking management of members' records and also for tirelessly chasing up late payers, of which unfortunately a number still persist.

I would also like to pay special thanks to Jem Norris who has chosen to stand-down from the chairmanship of the bar and social committees after thirty years sterling work. He has been one of the true stalwarts of the club and all members owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude.

After many years at the helm, it is most gratifying to see Clive Bowen-Davies continuing to run the Fifty Club which brings in a not insignificant amount of money each year as well as helping to satisfy many of the members' gambling habits.

Also on behalf of the members I must pay a special tribute to the late Alan Cutler, and the outstanding work he did over the years, not just for the club, but also for the school and latterly the college. He will be sadly missed.

Our excellent Stewards, Tim and Tracey, have served the club magnificently over the last year and, despite the innumerable problems they have had to deal with regarding Covid, continue to give the club excellent service.

I would like to close by offering my congratulations to the incoming President, Rob Morrison and wish him and his wife Jenny an enjoyable year of tenure. I have known Rob both socially and professionally for a number of years and have every confidence in his ability to successfully lead the club through all the difficult times that undoubtedly lie ahead.

Finally, could I now ask all members to show their appreciation in the usual way".

Following the round of applause, President Robin Morrison thanked Graham for the excellent way he proposed the vote of thanks.

12. Other Business

Clive Bowen Davies said one of the Trustees had asked if there were any developments regarding club wine held in store, off site. David Burrows reported that he, Andrew Taplin and Jem Norris had correctly identified the wines held off store (in Alan Cutler's wine store in Lye). Subsequently Jem Norris and Andrew Taplin removed those wines which are now located in cellar storage at Andrew Taplin's office premises in Hagley Road, Stourbridge.

The wines are in the process of being valued, club members will then be given opportunity to purchase and any residue of unwanted wines will be offered either to Nicholls & Perks or Tanners of Shrewsbury.

Andrew Taplin further reported that the ports and wines were not nearing the end of their shelf life (in fact they were at Alan Cutler's Lye storage facility because they were too young to be yet offered to the club membership for consumption at club events).

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Stuart Barclay also gave personal thanks to the Committee and to Jem Norris. Having talked to Tim and Tracey, he said they appreciated the efforts of the Committee in keeping them safe and in looking after them in a wider sense.

John Yeates congratulated Robin and was glad to see Rob Hill going through a second term. He said the ZOOM AGM meeting is better than nothing and that we had done well to make it happen.

Alan Roden raised the effectiveness of this ZOOM meeting as a means of reaching remote and other people not otherwise able to physically join us at the Club. Today at least one person was dialling in more than 100 miles away who otherwise would not have been at the AGM if held at the Club.

Stewart Barclay and others agreed this was a good idea and we might think of the possibility of an online screen that could help broadcast and receive interactive contributions in the future.

Siward James-Moore concurred it was a good idea but asked if we should build it into the rules to ensure it does not infringe the bylaws due to voting and other issues.

President Robin said we would make it happen somehow. Alan Roden will check the bylaws and get back to the Committee after approaching Pete Waldron as our legal representative.

Stewart Barclay concurred it is the way forward for communications, and once Peter Waldron has approved (or otherwise) we will need to inform members.

Meanwhile, David Trewin had looked up the bylaws and said the words for voting at AGMs just say “present at the meeting” and is silent as regards the location of the meeting (i.e. on line or at the Club) so we are probably safe within the rules.

Adrian Clark suggested a Proxy system for voting. This would need to be passed at a future EGM or AGM as it is currently outside the provisions of the bylaws.

David Burrows warned those present that although we recorded a profit last year, it may not necessarily be the case next year depending on circumstances.

13. Close of Meeting

The new President thanked members for their attendance and thoughts and declared the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

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(Robin Morrison, 2020 - 2021 President)

14. APPENDIX - Attendance Register

Robin Morrison
Robert Hill
Brian Arch
Mike Aston
David Burrows
Alan Roden
John Brown
Roger Hadley
Siward James-Moore
Jem Norris
Clive Bowen-Davies
David Trewin
Roger Stephenson
Paul Thatcher
Graham Wood
Peter Harrington
Roger Seabury
Adrian Clark
John Yeates
Garth Wooldridge
Peter Cartwright
Andrew Taplin
Paul Mobberley
Stewart Barclay
Martyn Price
Ken Cowdry
David Giddings

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