

The Wincheap Society

Minutes of The Wincheap Society Annual General Meeting at 7.30p.m. on Friday, 23rd May, 2014, at Jubilee Hall, Cow Lane

1. **Apologies for absence:** Gaurav Kathuria, Paula Spencer, Nick Eden-Green

2. Welcome and Chairman's Report

Wincheap Society's Chair John Osborne outlined Society activities over the past year.

Once again, it has been a busy year for our small but dedicated committee. Family and business commitments have taken their toll, with committee members resigning and others being unable to attend committee meetings. We have nevertheless co-opted two new members during the year. They are Spencer Hollands and James Wilford.

The start of the year saw the former Printing House in Simmonds Road getting planning permission on appeal for a family entertainment centre. However, the Planning Inspectorate imposed numerous conditions, which may well make the project uneconomic. John has not previously known restrictions like these imposed by an Inspector.

The former Roger Britton site still remains undeveloped, although plans have now been passed. We are awaiting news of a commencement date for the works.

Hambrook Marshes have been secured for public access thanks to an anonymous benefactor purchasing the site so that it will continue to be a wonderful local amenity.

We have tried to ensure the future of the Jubilee Hall. Debra Johnson, who runs the Next Generation Dance Studio, tried to take over the lease and we supported her actions, but the Council officials simply passed her from pillar to post. Once the Senior Citizens' Club closes at the end of the year, the property will revert to the Council, who will probably not retain the Hall.

We submitted an objection to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England concerning the City Council's plans to reduce the number of local councillors from fifty to thirty-eight. Despite the overwhelming number of objections to the proposal, the LGBCE accepted the Council's proposal. The discussion goes on regarding the boundary changes which will accompany the implementation of this decision.

We have supported County Councillor Martin Vye in applying for a grant to have replacement trees planted at Homersham and another grant for the re-surfacing of Hop Garden Way. The trees have now been planted and full finance is now in place for Hop Garden Way.

One of our local landmarks will soon be disappearing. Permission has been granted for the demolition of the redundant gas holder on the trading estate. We thought the consultation period was insufficient, but for various reasons it seems the customary four weeks are not necessary. We made an application under the Freedom of Information Act to ensure that all the procedures had been correctly followed and are still assessing this. A new planning application CA//14/00757/DEM has been submitted for the demolition of the holder. If members are in favour of preserving this part of our historical, industrial and architectural heritage, they have until 6th June to submit representations to the Council.

The traffic congestion outside Wincheap School, which was raised at last year's AGM, remains a problem. The School is the only primary in Canterbury not taking part in the *Love Your City* scheme (similar to the 'walking bus'). We have had a meeting with the Head and he is adamant that the scheme is not a genuine answer to the problem. He has made efforts to ease congestion and parking on pavements on several occasions by standing outside with a police officer at dropping-off and picking-up times. He has also written to parents on the issue.

We are supporting the Campaign for Democracy in Canterbury. Its object is to have the required number of signatures (5% of the electorate) on a petition to force the Council to hold a referendum on returning to the committee system of governance.

The committee entered a team in the Wine and Wisdom Evening held by Debra Johnson in aid of the Next Generation Dance Studio to raise funds to cover the costs of their upcoming show and the move from Jubilee Hall to Canterbury Academy. We came fourth.

We are working with the Association of Canterbury Residents' Associations (ACRA) regarding the Draft Local Plan. You will have seen in the local press the proposals for considerable development in the city, much of which is housing. The Council's Transport Strategy had not been published when the Draft Plan was out for consultation. The second stage of the consultation has now been reached. We are questioning the proposal to build an off slip road from the Dover-bound A2, which will channel traffic through the trading estate and join Wincheap by the Maiden's Head. The stated aim of improving traffic flow will manifestly not be achieved. Every time a large vehicle comes out of Simmonds Road onto Wincheap the Ashford-bound traffic has to stop and give way, causing a tailback onto the roundabout. With many more heavy vehicles using this route with the new slip road, the hold-ups will only get worse. Under the ACRA banner, we are meeting the Council in a few weeks to discuss the matter and put our concerns to them.

At the end of his report, John expressed his thanks to everyone on and off the committee for all their hard work and support throughout the past year.

In discussion it was agreed that Wincheap Society should continue its efforts to save Jubilee Hall. It was built by a benefactor for the district, not by the Council. The issue will go on the agenda for the next committee meeting. Members were urged to write to the newspapers in support of any Wincheap Society letter on the matter.

3. Financial Statement

As the bank has not provided the Society with a statement as requested since February, a proper account of the Society's finances could not be given. This situation will be remedied by placing a full statement on the website as soon as it is available.

It was pointed out that several thousands of pounds in the account are to finance the re-surfacing of Hop Garden Way. The County Council grant must be channelled through our Society in this way.

4. Election of Committee

John Osborne was unanimously re-elected as Chair, Eddie Peake as Treasurer and Paula Spencer as representative for the Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

Sarah Walter, Joe Passey, Anne Foster, Pat Marsh, Debra Johnson, Spencer Hollands, James Wilford and Gaurav Kathuria were also re-elected en bloc to the Committee.

5. Any Other Business

- i. John urged members to renew their membership.
- ii. Kent Federation of Amenity Societies is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and is holding a free event in Faversham Guildhall to mark this. Anyone who would like to represent Wincheap Society at the celebration should contact John for details.
- iii. John urged members to sign the Campaign for Democracy in Canterbury District's petition for a referendum on changing Canterbury City Council's system of governance back from the Executive model to a Committee one.
- iv. The Next Generation Dance Studio has a show at Canterbury Academy at 2pm and 6pm on Saturday, 19th July. Tickets are £5.00.

6. Talk by Mrs Viv Woods, author of Wincheap Untold – Between the Bridges

John closed the AGM at 9 pm.