

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Of CPRE NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

held by Zoom at 5.30 pm on Monday 16 November 2020

Officers present:	David Laing	President
	Paul Parsons	Chairman
	Robin Jones	Acting Treasurer

Members/Proxies:	Members present in person:	17
	Proxies:	20

### 1 Welcome and Opening remarks by the Chairman

The Chairman welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting and confirmed that the meeting was quorate. He extended a warm welcome to David Laing, President of CPRE Northamptonshire.

The Chairman thanked his fellow trustees for their work throughout the year and for their guidance in his first few months as Chairman, particularly given the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. Thanks were also due to volunteers for their support for the Charity. He also recorded his thanks to Martin Gaskell, his predecessor as Chairman, who had stepped down as a trustee earlier in the year and to David Edsall who was stepping down as a trustee after many years, during which time he had been very involved in the production of the Building Design Guide. David intended to continue as a technical secretary.

The Chairman gave an update on the branch's financial position. Having for a number of years failed to achieve a surplus on Unrestricted Funds, trustees began 2020 with concerns about the ongoing financial position albeit they still had some room for manoeuvre. The advent of Covid-19 however changed this position and fundraising events became impossible. Without that source of income and despite recourse to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the branch could no longer afford to retain its sole employee without some change to the terms on which she was employed. Failure to reach agreement on any change had led to the difficult decision to make the position of Branch Development and Education Manager redundant. The Chairman recorded his thanks to Sally Hanrahan for her contribution over many years. The year was forecast to end with a deficit of around £10,500 on Unrestricted Funds but the Chairman was confident that the necessary steps had been taken to ensure the Charity's financial viability for the foreseeable future.

The Chairman gave a brief review of the year's activities. Whilst this had not been an easy year with no social or fund-raising events, no face to face interaction and the cancellation of the Community Awards, there were some positive aspects.

The format of the Litter Heroes Awards, sponsored by the branch President David Laing, had been changed and award money usually presented for the best organised/attended litter picks had been utilised by way of grants for litter picking equipment to groups who had applied on a first come/first served basis.

A well attended planning roadshow, focusing on the impact and shortcomings of the recent Planning White Papers, had been held via Zoom on 19 October 2020.

A further roadshow covering Unitary Authorities, which had been originally planned for earlier in the year, would now be held in January 2021. Progress continued to be made on the Landscape Design Guide and throughout the year the Technical Secretaries had been involved in ongoing casework across the county.

Looking forward, the Chairman said his aim over the coming years was to strengthen the charity to ensure its long-term viability and its ability to deliver on its core purposes even more effectively. The focus will therefore be on increased membership/diversity of membership, improved member retention, increased volunteer base, more effective lobbying at local level, strengthening of trustee body/succession planning and achieving a higher profile in the county. Work was in hand on producing a clear, updated strategy document, together with a review of internal organisation.

The Chairman invited questions from the meeting. Caroline Cross asked how many town/parish councils were current members of CPRE Northamptonshire. Peter Hopkins confirmed around 80 (c. 25% of the total number within the county). The Chairman confirmed that over the coming year increased efforts would be made to engage with/retain these members and to increase numbers.

Peter Aiers asked whether the branch strategy was to drive recruitment of members via the CPRE National Office website or to target locally. Peter Hopkins advised that members came from various initiatives, both local and National Office. The current CPRE Northamptonshire website needed to be updated and work had started to explore how this might best be achieved. The Chairman referred to a recent direct mailing to selected individuals which had produced some new members. He anticipated a range of initiatives over coming months to increase membership.

**2 Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 July 2019 and the virtual meeting held on 1 July 2020 to approve the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019**

It was resolved that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 July 2019 and the minutes of the General Meeting held on 1 July 2020, which had been previously circulated, be approved as a true record of those meetings.

**3 Election of Honorary Officers and Executive Committee Members for the year 2020/2021**

- The re-appointment of David Laing as President was proposed by Sir Paul Hayter and seconded by Andrew Powles.
- The re-appointment of Lady Robinson as Vice President was proposed by Brian Skittrall and seconded by Alan Mayes.
- The re-appointment of Paul Parsons as Chairman was proposed by David Laing and seconded by Sir Paul Hayter.
- The re-appointment of John Day, Sir Paul Hayter, Peter Hopkins, Robin Jones, Alan Mayes, Andrew Powles and Brian Skittrall as Executive Committee members was proposed by Paul Parsons and seconded by David Laing.

Robin Jones confirmed that the clause in the branch Articles of Association relating to the maximum period an honorary officer might serve prevented him from acting as Treasurer but that he was happy to continue as Acting Treasurer until such time as a suitable successor came forward.

It was resolved that all of the foregoing be elected for the year 2020/2021.

**4 Re-appointment of DH Kelland FCA as Independent Examiner**

Robin Jones proposed and David Gater seconded and it was resolved that David Kelland of Meadows & Co Limited be re-appointed as independent examiner.

**5 Any other business**

David Gater asked whether any response had been forthcoming as regards representations made to the Government on the Planning White Paper. Alan Mayes advised that there had been a great number of representations from across the country and the government was still considering these. Brian Skittrall said that, given the level of opposition, it was quite possible that the current White Paper would be significantly amended.

**6 Closing remarks by the President**

David Laing thanked the Chairman, Trustees and volunteers for their work throughout the year and added his thanks to Martin Gaskell and Sally Hanrahan for their efforts over many years. He emphasised the need to recruit new talent to enhance and refresh the existing skill sets.

He was encouraged by the fact that litter picking remained a priority for many villages but sadly fly-tipping continued to spoil the countryside and all efforts to prevent this must be encouraged.

He confirmed that he would be arranging to make available some 300/400 copies of his book, featuring words and illustrations referencing the passing of a year in the countryside, which would go on sale later next year in aid of CPRE Northamptonshire.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.