

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF ULSTER ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Held at The Old Museum Building, College Square North, Belfast on Wednesday 18 April 2018 at 7pm.

The Chair was taken by the President, Mrs Primrose Wilson, with members and guests present.

The President welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting.

1. Notice of Meeting

The notice convening the meeting was taken as read.

2. Apologies

The Hon Secretary read the apologies received from Mr Alastair Rankin; Mrs Karen Latimer; Mr Terence Reeves-Smyth; Mr Terence Reeves-Smyth, Dr Patricia Warke and Mr & Mrs Noel Marshall.

3. Minutes of the Nineteenth AGM held on Thursday 23 February 2017 7pm

The Chairman asked if there were any request for amendments and none were received. The minutes were proposed by Mr Christopher Slater and seconded by Sir Donnell Deeny. As there were no amendments the meeting agreed and accordingly the Minutes were signed by the President.

4. Hon. Treasurer's Report

The President asked Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson to report on the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2017.

Honorary Treasurers Report for the Year to 31st December 2017

I have the pleasure of presenting this report as the Society's Honorary Treasurer. The Society's financial health reflects the increase in activity during the year as outlined by the Chairman.

Firstly I have to report that the Society's net worth has increased by 18% to £156,056. As outlined in the financial report we achieved a surplus for the year of £23,652. However when legacy income of £21,727 is deducted we are left with a surplus of £1,925.

Income rose by 37% to £225,148 continuing an upward trend. This reflects a substantial increase in project and consultancy activity.

▪ Events

Events income fell from £20,485 in 2016 to £13,784, but showed a net contribution to funds of £5,688, down from £7,485 in 2016. This fall perhaps reflects the fact that there was no UK or foreign trip in 2017. The Society appreciates the efforts of the Events Committee in generating these funds.

▪ Publications

Gross income from publications is £17,895. Our new publication, Glamour & Gloom: 1930s Architecture in Belfast involved an expenditure of £10,372. This left a net contribution of £7,523. We should recognise, however, that this figure does not reflect

the cost of book storage, currently standing at £5,545, or postage costs. The publications committee is examining how to address book storage costs and our new website offers improved marketing opportunities for our publications. We appreciate the efforts of the publications committee in producing high quality publications, which has been one of the society's principal objectives.

▪ **Membership**

Income from membership subscriptions has fallen from £22,465 to £21,649. This is a core element of the society's income. Therefore any decline in membership is of some concern. We are proposing a small increase of subscriptions in 2019.

▪ **Consultancy and projects**

The Society's consultancy activity, for example Open House Belfast and Maintain to Retain, generated a net income of £19,185. Projects, notably Heritage Angels, our summer school and BHARNI produced an income of £123,397. These significant contributions are a compliment to the work of our chief executive and her staff. However external circumstances mean we cannot be assured of this level of funding on an ongoing basis.

▪ **Legacies**

The Society received two significant legacies in 2017, totalling £21,727. In accordance with our articles of association, this amount was subsequently transferred to our Charifunds investment account. The tax free yield of Charifunds at 31st December 2017 remained a healthy 4.55%.

▪ **Deferred income**

Deferred income for the year amounted to £19,461 of which £13,341 is being held to fund the publication 'Buildings of South County Down.' A further £2,336 has been set aside as a contribution to a fund for the repair of a vernacular cottage on the north coast. Additionally £3,784, has been received from Belfast City Council as a contribution to the 'Festival for Heritage - 50 Years' project which will take place in the summer of 2018.

In summary, the Society has increased its turnover against rising costs and the falling availability of grant aid, including a sustained restriction of funds from central government of 50% since 2015. The Society also moved premises at the start of 2017 which involved expenditure of more than £10,000. Significantly we no longer have a deficit.

I would like to put on record my thanks to Connie and Maura from the office staff, who have helped me in the last year. My thanks also to all the committee members who have worked hard to generate funds through events and publications. Finally, I would particularly like to record my thanks to Nikki for her help with the accounts and also for bringing in substantial consultancy and project income over the past year.

Rosie Ford-Hutchinson
Honorary Treasurer

The President thanked Mrs Ford-Hutchinson and commented that the Society is deeply appreciative of the work she has done.

5. Questions

▪ **Seacoast Cottage**

The President asked for an update on the current situation regarding the £7,000 raised by the Society towards works at Seacoast Cottage. She was advised that UAH are

awaiting a report from the owners regarding completed actions before funding can be released.

- **Book Storage**

Trevor Edwards asked if there was a possibility of storing publications in the Old Museum building to alleviate storage costs. He was advised that at present this would not be possible given that the building also houses other tenants, but it could be considered within the long term planning for the premises.

- **Legacies**

Margaret Gunn King asked if the names of the individuals who have left legacies to UAH could be released. She was advised it depends on the wishes of their family and at the moment it was not possible to provide this information. It was also noted that they will receive a mention in the next publication.

- **Publications**

Christopher Slater asked if consideration could be given to publishing a book on Charles Brett. The President agreed to bring the suggestion to the Publications Committee.

There being no further questions the President asked that the accounts be adopted, and were proposed by Mr John Edmund and seconded Mr Sean Hagan.

6. **Committee's Report**

Dr David Johnston, Chairman, presented the committees report on the organisation's activities since the last AGM.

Committee report for the year to 31 December 2017

President, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my pleasure to bring the report on the activities of the Society over the last year - and once again what a year it has been!

They say a picture paints a thousand words and a song tells a million stories so on that basis I would like us to relax for a few minutes and watch and listen.....

UAHS Highlights of 2017

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTLnBtpaHXc>)

That was a summary of 2017 accompanied by the words and music of Duke Special entitled "While Orpheus sings" . Based on Belfast's Floral Hall this was specially composed for the Heritage Angel awards.

I am sure you will agree with me that it has been a truly wonderful year of events and activity promoting the unique and special built heritage that we all share.

Unfortunately I now have to bring you back to Earth and use some of those words rather than pictures or even song, you will be glad to know, to give you the formal report for the year to December 2017.

I think it is appropriate that at the outset I express my admiration for, and thanks to, our fantastic staff team who always rise to any challenge and go the extra mile to ensure Ulster Architectural Heritage "punches above its weight" and always exceeds expectations.

Ms Nikki McVeigh, our chief executive has completed her third year and just as I said last year, it has once again, not been dull. Nikki has been central to all that has been achieved. Whether its new premises, transition process, funding applications, supporting members,

committees or staff Nikki is in the thick of it, driving things forward. So I do want to put on record our sincere gratitude and thanks for all that you do. Thank you Nikki.

Mrs Esther O' Sullivan our administrator stood down during the year and I want to thank Esther for her help over a number of years and wish her well in the future.

We were delighted to recruit Ms Maura Ahern as our Heritage Communications & Events Officer during the year. Maura was central to the Heritage Angel Awards and I want to thank her for bringing her experience and good sense to the team, helping to ensure we all remained calm and things ran smoothly. Thank you Maura.

The BHARNI work continues apace and our Heritage at Risk Officer, Ms Connie Gerrow, continues to make an impact despite the challenging funding environment and resultant uncertainty. This partnership with HED and its predecessors has been hugely successful and we hope its value will be recognised and that it will continue to be supported. Meantime I want to not only thank Connie for all she does but also congratulate her on two fronts. Firstly, during the last year she has gained a PhD and is now Dr Gerrow and secondly she has just become engaged to be married – so congratulations Connie!

Yet again the past year has been a particularly busy one with the usual activities ongoing and a few more besides, in addition to the move to our new home here in The Old Museum building. We have already heard from the Hon. Treasurer about the financial situation which although improved remains a challenge and one that we cannot afford to neglect. And at this point I would thank our Hon treasurer, Rosie Forde Hutchinson for her diligence and effort in this position. Thank you Rosie.

By developing partnerships and our consultancy role based on the unique and desirable skill set we offer significant income has been generated and our profile raised and better understood.

Funded by the Andrew Lloyd Weber Foundation and with the support of Historic Environment Division, UAH organised and delivered the UK wide Heritage Angel Awards in Northern Ireland for the first time. This was a huge effort and a steep learning curve for staff but the result surpassed all expectations with a very large field of high caliber entrants, enthusiastic judging panels, and worthy winners announced in front of an audience of 750 people at a gala evening of entertainment and original music. The latter being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The resultant feel good factor and very positive publicity was a wonderful way to raise the profile of our built heritage in our Golden Jubilee year.

I want to thank our staff, partners and sponsors for coming together to ensure such a wonderful success.

Much of the work of UAH is conducted through our Sub committees and they continue to do sterling work.

Primrose Wilson and the Events committee and our staff have been as industrious as ever with a full programme of activities. It is interesting that in terms of events, visits, workshops and lectures, UAH staff and volunteers organised more than 22 activities involving over 1500 participants. Well done to everyone involved!

One of the highlights of the year was the Summer School in Derry and Donegal. It was organised as part of our Golden Jubilee celebrations and was a great success, hugely enjoyed by the young students and slightly older "lifelong learners".

We thank Derry and Strabane council for their financial support and sincere thanks to Primrose for all the effort and the many miles travelled in organising this event and all the others.

I also want to specially acknowledge Primrose who has retired from the role of Chair of Events during the year after many successful years in that position. I am not sure how many events Primrose has organised over the years but it certainly runs into hundreds so Primrose we owe you a great debt of gratitude for the hours and days spent on this and for your organisational and networking skills which ensured continued success. Sincere thanks from us all. Dr Murray Power took over the helm at Events this autumn and we wish him well.

The Publication committee oversaw the production of our latest book, "Glamour and Gloom: 1930s Architecture in Belfast" which following a very successful and well attended pre-Christmas launch is proving popular. Eager as ever, the publication committee are already well advanced with the next publications.

The Conservation, Planning and Policy committee chaired by John Anderson has again been very active this year leading or supporting campaigns and advising in others, in addition to attending relevant planning meetings or providing detailed written submissions. The planning procedures and their implementation still appear to be dependent on which council area you are in. However we continue to work at developing useful relationships with the councils and their planning departments to raise the profile and appreciation of our built heritage. Campaigning and lobbying at central and local government level is a hugely important aspect of our role and we thank John and everyone involved for their hard work and support.

The committee and officers group continue to give generously of their time and knowledge. I greatly value their support and I would like to pay tribute to their contribution to all that UAH achieves. John Anderson as vice chair, Rosie Ford Hutchinson as Hon Treasurer and Sean Hagan as Hon Secretary, has fulfilled these positions with diligence and enthusiasm. In particular I want to pay tribute to Sean who is standing down this year as Hon Secretary after, I believe, 23 years. His circumspect advice, wise words and cool head mean that when Sean speaks others listen. Sean was deeply committed during all those years and led our ultimately successful Judicial Reviews. Sean, on behalf of us all I thank you and I trust we will see both you and Philomena at many of our activities in the future.

Karen Latimer is also standing down this year after very many years on committee. Karen cannot be with us tonight as she is out of the country but I want to formally thank her for all her hard work, wise counsel and generosity with her skill and time. Happily Karen will continue to chair our Publication committee.

Terence Reeves- Smyth is also standing down this year, again after many years on committee and we will miss his jovial presence and encyclopaedic knowledge. To Terence we also say a sincere thanks.

Sean, Karen and Terence have each given many years of dedicated service and on your behalf I want to thank them for all their hard work and support over the years. Perhaps you will join me in giving them a clap.

I should warn them that they may not escape entirely as Murray Power discovered last year when, having stood down, he was co-opted back onto committee after being "encouraged" by Primrose to take on the Events committee. So in conclusion it has been a very busy year and I hope that has given a flavour of all that has been achieved.

UAH is a not for profit organisation with a 50 year record of achievement and working in partnership. It is the lead independent voice for the promotion and protection of Ulster's built heritage, focused on encouraging regeneration for the benefit of people and communities.

Our historic built environment is a culture and a heritage that knows no boundaries. It is part of our everyday experience in our countryside, our villages and our towns that forms the backdrop and scenery against which we all live our lives and which contributes to the quality of our lives.

Earlier this year we had a very successful 50th Anniversary dinner which I will report on next year but I quoted Seamus Heaney then and I will finish with one of my favorite quotes from him now,

“What is taken as a matter of fact in childhood became a matter of wonder in memory.”

As we think of the last fifty years we remember those who took the then, Society forward. They were doing what they considered “matter of fact” things at the time but today they have become a matter of wonder as we remember all that has been achieved and consider the future.

So as we look forward, your ongoing support is perhaps more important than ever.

Thank you.

Now I mentioned our 50th Anniversary Dinner earlier and The Hon Lord Justice Donnell Deeny, our former President, was to have been present but owing to illness he was unable to join us on that occasion. I am delighted to say he is now fit and well and joins us this evening.

So I would like to thank Sir Donnell for his generous support and help over so many years and I would also wish him well in his elevation to the Court of Appeal as a Lord Justice. I will now ask Primrose to hand over this small token of our esteem and appreciation.

The President expressed her thanks to the British Council for their support with the 2017 Summer School.

7. Retirement from Committee

The Chairman advised that the Hon Secretary Sean Hagan and Mrs Karen Latimer will be retiring from the Committee.

8. Election of Members and Officers of Committee

The Chairman advised that Mr Paul Harron and Dr Patricia Warke will become new members of the Committee

9. Appointment of Examiners

The Chairman took as the next item the Appointment of Examiners, Mrs Rosie Ford-Hutchinson reported that the accountancy firm of Ross Boyd Ltd have provided an excellent service and therefore proposed that they be reappointed as the Society’s examiners, seconded by Mr John Edmund.

10. Any Other Business

None

There being no further business, the meeting concluded and members adjourned for refreshments.

