

# The Chesham Society Special General Meeting

19:30, Thursday 25 July 2019

Council Chamber, Chesham Town Hall

## 1. Election of a Chairman of the Special General Meeting [SGM]

As co-opted Secretary of the SGM John Graves [JG] welcomed members and guests, and then called a vote for Dr Jim Conboy [JC] to preside as Chairman of the meeting. Proposed by Damaris Barnes, seconded by Tony Molesworth [TM]. Motion unanimously carried.

It was also noted by JG (though not publicly announced) that the following apologies from members had been received:

David Blythe  
Emily Culverhouse  
Keith Fletcher  
June Hutchinson  
Jill McCluney  
Hilary Povey

## 2. Changes to the Chesham Society's Constitution

A paper was circulated to members ahead of the start of the meeting describing in detail the proposed changes to the following items in the Constitution:

Clause 7: Executive Committee  
Clause 11: Meetings and proceedings of the Executive Committee  
Clause 12: Receipts and Expenditure

JC gave a brief resumé of what has been happening to the Society since the flawed AGM held on 24 January. He apologised for the delay in reviving the Society, as was requested at the AGM. This meeting was called at the request of ten members of the society, due to the lack of effective activity since the AGM, and in part because the consultation on the new Local Plan was launched and members expected the Society to effect a response. He reported that he arranged a meeting on 9 July between Chesham Renaissance, Brown not Green, and the Chiltern Society to discuss how Chesham should respond to the consultation.<sup>1</sup>

JC then went on to explain the proposed changes to the Constitution and why they were needed. The Constitution calls for between ten and fourteen committee members, which the Society hasn't had for years; this is to be reduced, with a corresponding reduction in the quorum:

Clause 7 (1) to read:

- (1) The Executive Committee shall consist of not less than 6 members nor more than 10 members being:
  - (a) the 4 honorary officers specified in the preceding clause;
  - (b) not less than 2 and not more than 6 members elected at the annual general meeting who shall hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

Clause 11 (3) to read:

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.cheshamsociety.org.uk/Campaigns/LocalPlan/190710/LocalPlanMeeting.htm> for minutes etc.

There shall be a quorum when at least three members of the Executive Committee, two of whom being honorary officers, are present at a meeting. The current constitution specifies a third of the committee, without reference to the 'Honorary Officers' (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary). Clause 11 (5) to read:

The Executive Committee shall keep minutes, online or in books kept for the purpose, of the proceedings at meetings of the Executive Committee and any sub-committee. **A hard copy of online minutes will be retained** (additions in bold type).

JC called for a vote to amend Clauses 7 and 11: proposed by Richard Berry, seconded by Allen Tilbury. Motion unanimously carried.

JC then explained why we needed changes to the Constitution to take into account online and paperless banking.

Clause 12 (1) to read:

The funds of the Society ... shall be paid into an account operated by the Executive Committee in the name of the Society ... All **transactions** on the account must be **authorised** by at least two members of the Executive Committee.

JC called for a vote to amend Clause 12: proposed by Merrin Molesworth, seconded by Gerry Griffin [GG]. Motion unanimously carried.

The amended constitution can be found on our website.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Election of a new Executive Committee

Nomination forms had been received for all four Honorary posts and two ordinary posts, and JC handed the meeting over to Dr Angela Bishop [AB] to preside over the election.

Nomination for Chairman, JC: proposed by JG, seconded by Jean Slater [JS]. Motion unanimously carried.

Nomination for Vice Chairman, JS: proposed by Mora Walker [MW], seconded by Richard Gamester [RG]. Motion unanimously carried.

Nomination for Honorary Secretary, JG: proposed by JS, seconded by RG. Motion unanimously carried.

Nomination for Honorary Treasurer, GG: proposed by JC, seconded by JS. Motion unanimously carried.

Nomination for Ordinary Member of the Executive Committee, MW: proposed by RG, seconded by JS. Motion unanimously carried.

Nomination for Ordinary Member of the Executive Committee, RG: proposed by JC, seconded by JG. Motion unanimously carried.

JC thanked AB for her help in facilitating the election and called for members who were interested in supporting the new Committee to step forward after the close of the meeting.

### 4. The future of the Society

JC recounted the part of the Constitution that describes why the Chesham Society exists:

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.cheshamsociety.org.uk/About/Constitution%20ChSoc\\_%20190725.pdf](http://www.cheshamsociety.org.uk/About/Constitution%20ChSoc_%20190725.pdf)

“The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising Chesham town and the surrounding parishes of Chartridge, Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards, Ashley Green, Latimer and Chesham Bois. To protect and enhance the built and natural heritage of Chesham, promote high standards of architecture and promote civic pride throughout the area of benefit. To maintain and improve the environment and amenities enjoyed by local people and visitors and to encourage public interest in the history and character of the Town. To promote research into subjects directly connected with the objects of the Society and to publish the results of any such research. To promote high and sustainable standards of urban development, regeneration and planning as they affect the area of benefit. To support and work with organisations involved in the development of facilities for the advancement of arts and culture, environmental improvement and community development in the area of benefit. To advance the education of young people in the area of benefit in the importance of civic values.

JC reminded members that the Constitution doesn't tell us how to carry out the above principles. Our priorities are issues resulting from the Local Plan such as building retail spaces over car parks, green belt land under threat from developers, etc. These are areas in which the Society can influence change. Undesirable infill development is constantly taking place. The Society will help to ensure builders behave in a responsible manner. We will help to bring people together.

Events and publicity - JC said that we used to organise an event every month, but we currently do not have the resources and so welcome suggestions and support from members. Not all events in the future will take place in the evening - for example we are looking to organise coffee shop mornings (at The Drawing Room, for example) every month. We are also considering setting up a PTA & school governors' forum. We will also need help with re-establishing *Focus* as a regular newsletter.

JC asked members and guests if there were any questions or suggestions?

John Barber told the meeting that he has experience of charity information and asked who are the trustees of the Society? JC told him the trustees and executive committee are one and the same thing.

Roderick McCulloch [RMCC] asked whether the Society was still affiliated with Civic Voice as it was a useful organisation with which to belong? JC confirmed that we remain members and that we are also members of the London Green Belt Association.

TM said that ANTAS has been disbanded but Civic Voice is still going strong with a good newsletter. This year its annual conference is being held in London and is well worth attending.

Richard Berry asked that, given the situation with Chiltern District Council planning, could we redefine what is meant by “Chesham”? JC said that currently the Society's scope was Chesham and the adjacent parishes, but felt that this is too narrow and we should enlarge our area of benefit to include more of the surrounding AONB. TM added that the Wendover Society would not be happy!

RMCC then addressed the meeting stating that as a former Secretary of the Society, he had been immensely sorry to hear of its woes and potential demise. Like many other members he didn't get notices of the AGM in January and so was not aware of it taking place. Although he has not been an active member over the last few years, he has many happy memories of its events and, over the course of sixty years, it has been involved in many important projects and campaigns. He added that he will be looking forward to working with the Society in the future.

## 5. Any other business

There was no other business. The meeting closed at 20:05 and refreshments were served. A total of 43 members and six guests attended the meeting.

I certify that these minutes are a true record of the meeting

Jim Conboy, Chairman