

Notes of an Executive Meeting of the Chepstow Society
held on Thursday 26th November 2020 via Zoom

Present: Geoff Sumner (Chair), Keith James (Vice-Chair), Guy Hamilton, Sallie James, Harry Middleditch, David Nicholls, Chris Penrose, Anne Rainsbury, Marian Thomas; Simon Maddison, Carolyn Read (invited members)

Apologies for absence: Henry Hodges, Angela Middleditch

1. Geoff welcomed everyone present. Unfortunately Henry's connection issues were not resolved. The links for future Zoom meetings would be unchanged – Meeting ID 562 383 2571, password Waters
2. **Notes of previous meeting on 1st October 2020**
 - These had been circulated and were agreed.
 - Geoff noted that the St Kingsmark plaque unveiling in October had been a success, but expressed disappointment that local councillors and religious figures had not attended.
3. **Future arrangements for monthly talks**
 - Geoff apologised for the equipment failure at the November Zoom meeting, which meant that he had missed the start of the talk and had to curtail the meeting more quickly than he would have liked. The talk itself was felt to be excellent.
 - It was agreed that in future Geoff should mute the sound of those attending, during the talk. Annie suggested that those attending could type questions into chat, to be answered at the end.

Action: Geoff
 - There was discussion over whether the meetings should start later than 7 pm, and various opinions were expressed. The majority view was that the start time should remain at 7 pm, but that there should be a more relaxed ending to the meeting, with the opportunity to raise general points for discussion, as well as questions to the speaker.

Action: Geoff
 - Because of the current restrictions on meetings, a special Zoom meeting had been arranged for 16th December, with John Burrows as the speaker.
 - Guy asked for volunteers to write a brief summary of each talk in future, for inclusion in the members' bulletin. Sallie offered to contribute on the December talk.

Action: All
4. **Future arrangements for civic and amenity matters**
 - Guy reported that an exploratory Zoom meeting for Society members and elected representatives had been arranged for 2nd December. The joining details would be recirculated to members. Several town council members, together with representatives from the Forest of Dean, and town council staff, had said that they would attend. Annie pointed out that many of the issues were the responsibility of the county council rather than the town council.
 - Guy suggested that, after a brief introduction, it would be useful if town council members and others could briefly sum up the responsibilities of the different authorities, and summarise the current and ongoing amenity, planning and related issues on which they would like more public involvement, particularly by the Society. There could then be the opportunity for questions, and a discussion on the best way forward.
 - Simon raised the current Transport Study. Guy thought that it might be difficult to organise an agreed response on behalf of the Society by the closing date of 13th December.

- Various options on future arrangements were suggested, including regular Society meetings on civic and amenity matters, perhaps every two months, and/or setting up a small sub-group to cover civic and amenity matters. After some discussion it was agreed that, after the conclusion of the general meeting on 2nd December, the committee would meet to consider the best way forward. *Action: All*

5. Treasurer's report

- David reported that the accounts had now been transferred to Lloyds Bank. There was £3577 in the current account, in addition to building society deposits.
- Keith commented that bank statements for the excursions account had not been received for several months.

6. Plaques and Heritage Grant application

- Guy reported that the Heritage Fund application had not been successful, although he had not received any further information.
- It was agreed that, in principle, the Society should commission several suitable plaques from Ned Heywood, with a ballpark budget figure of £3000 spread over two years, implemented on a phased basis to maximise publicity.
- A number of possible locations for plaques had already been suggested. It was agreed that Guy and Annie draw up a shorter list of possibilities for further consideration. These could then be the subject of consultation with Society members. *Action: Guy, Annie*
- Annie reported that the plaque beside the Coast Path at the Bulwarks Iron Age hillfort had been vandalised and destroyed, but that Ned would be able to make a replacement. It was now the responsibility of the county council to action this.

7. Membership report

Marian reported that there were currently 141 members.

8. Excursions

Keith reported that the France and Belgium holiday was ready to take place once COVID restrictions were lifted.

9. Museum

Annie reported that the Museum was currently open for two days per week, but would close between mid-December and February.

10. Publications

Guy noted that sales had obviously fallen, but publications were now advertised on the bookshop's website.

11. Gwent Local History Council

Nothing to report

12. Press

Guy reported that the St Kingsmark plaque unveiling had received some local press publicity.

13. Date of next meeting

- As noted under **4**, it was agreed that the committee would meet if necessary, at the end of the meeting on 2nd December.
- The next scheduled meeting would be on Thursday 11th February, at 7 pm.