

Notes of an Executive Meeting of the Chepstow Society
held on Thursday 17th February 2022 via Zoom

Present: Geoff Sumner (Chair), Keith James (Vice-Chair), Guy Hamilton, Angela Middleditch, Harry Middleditch, David Nicholls, Chris Penrose

Apologies for absence: Nicky Bailey, Sallie James, Simon Maddison, Anne Rainsbury

1. Geoff welcomed everyone present. Nicky, Sallie and Anne were all involved in a show at the Drill Hall.
2. **Notes of meeting on 25th November 2021**
These had been circulated and were agreed.
3. **Membership Secretary's report**
 - Angela noted that the current membership stood at 126, including 9 non-paying members.
 - There was some discussion over how to encourage more members to attend meetings, but it was noted that this was a perennial issue.
 - Subscriptions and payment arrangements were considered later in the meeting.
4. **Treasurer's report**
 - David had circulated updated accounts, which showed an income so far in 2021/22 of £1760, and outgoings of £2104 [corrected figure].
 - He reported that he had looked at the Square bank card payment system, which seemed to meet the Society's requirements. It was suggested that the system seemed to be more advanced than the simple portable system for accepting payments in various venues that was needed. David would look again at the options with a view to purchasing one prior to the March meeting. *Action: David, Guy*
5. **Civic and amenities matters**
 - The Zoom meeting on 2 February had been successful, with several town and county councillors, and county council officers, attending and providing useful updates. It was hoped that these would continue. *Action: Simon, Guy*
 - Guy reported that the county council had started an initial consultation process on the closure of the High Street. Members would be informed and urged to make individual comments.
6. **Excursions**
 - Keith reported continuing progress towards the trip to Kent in April. The prices of some of the activities, and fuel, had risen significantly and there would therefore need to be a supplement paid. Those contacted so far had willingly accepted this. *Action: Keith, Sallie*

7. **Commemorative plaques**

- Guy said that he would again check with Ned Heywood on progress with a design for the James Stephens plaque. *Action: Guy*

8. **Museum**

- The museum would reopen on 19 February.

9. **Gwent Local History Council**

- Chris reported that a Zoom meeting, the first for some time, would take place in March. *Action: Chris*
- Guy said that he was writing an article on James Stephens for the Gwent Local History journal, and would give a talk on the subject at the Chartist Convention in November. *Action: Guy*

10. **William Marshal statue**

- Geoff reported that he was continuing to liaise with local organisations including the town council. Keith Underwood's work on a maquette of a possible statue would be at no cost to the Society. *Action: Geoff*

11. **Publications**

- Guy reported that 400 copies of the "Remembering the Great War" booklet had been printed by Print Plus in Hereford (who had taken over the Whitehouse Press), at a cost of £610. So far, about 100 had been sold, and some had been distributed at the war memorial commemoration.
- An order for publications had been received from the museum, the first for several years. *Action: Guy*

12. **Future meeting arrangements**

- Geoff reported that he had arranged speakers up to and including September, all of whom would be able to give talks in the Drill Hall. No speakers had been confirmed after that.
- There was discussion of the proposal that we should return to having monthly meetings in the Drill Hall, starting in March, with the possibility of having remote speakers via Zoom over the winter months. It was recognised that some members may be reluctant to return to the Drill Hall immediately, and that discussions would be needed with the venue to ensure that satisfactory arrangements could be made for streaming talks via Zoom. It was also said that the Society should try to re-establish its public profile through the meetings, by publicising them and encouraging new members.
- It was agreed that meetings again be held in the Drill Hall from March, with the position being kept under review over the coming months. *Action: All*
- Geoff again urged committee members to suggest possible speakers for future talks, either local or via Zoom. *Action: All*

- Guy said that, once meetings were re-established, the frequency of the members' bulletin would be reduced. He also suggested that brief summaries of ongoing civic and amenity matters should again be reported at the monthly meetings. *Action: Guy, Simon*

13. Membership rates

- Several suggestions had been made over future membership rates, including the proposal that there should be two rates of membership, one for those attending meetings and a higher rate for those using Zoom. This idea was not generally supported.
- After further discussion it was agreed that the Society should retain a single rate for membership. Entry to Drill Hall meetings would be as before, at £1 for members and £3 for non-members.
- Subject to formal ratification at the AGM in May, it was agreed that the annual membership rate for 2022/23 be set at £12 per member. This would be advertised and publicised in advance. *Action: Angela, Guy*

14. Date of next meeting

- The next committee meeting will be on Thursday 21st April, at 7.15 pm