The Chepstow Society

Notes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 5th March 2025 at 7pm at the Drill Hall, Chepstow

Present: John Burrows (Chair), Nicky Bailey, Patrick Gale, Guy Hamilton, Marion Huckle, Keith James, Simon Maddison, David Nicholls, Annie Rainsbury

Apologies for absence: Sallie James, Angela Middleditch

1. **Minutes of the last meeting, 8th January**
   Subject to correcting the date of the Bristol excursion at minute 4(v) from June 3rd to April 3rd, these were approved as a correct record.

2. **Matters arising and not on the agenda**
   4(i) No date has been fixed for a presentation to Geoff Sumner, possibly at Hanley Farm Shop. This would involve Angela, Keith and John.
   ACTION: Angela to progress this.

   4(i) Further consideration should be given to an invitation to the Duchess of Beaufort to become a Patron of the Society.
   ACTION: John will check email addresses and progress this.

   7 John reported the response from Ian Saunders (MCC) to our email expressing concern over recent changes to the Museum Service.

3. **Meeting with Cllr. Paul Griffiths, 10th February**
   The meeting was generally thought to have been useful, but there was some concern over the disappointing attendance, possibly due to a lack of Town Council publicity.
   There was discussion over having similar meetings in future, noting that, if elected councillors or MPs were involved, we should not charge for entry but could perhaps recoup some expenses by charging for refreshments.
   Various suggestions were made as to who to invite to future meetings on civic and amenity matters, such as local MPs, Senedd members (MS), or representatives from Gloucestershire CC as well as Monmouthshire if the intention was to discuss cross-boundary issues such as traffic.
   ACTION: All to consider, and bring suggestions to the next meeting.

4. **Excursions**
   i) Patrick stated that the costs of the Tewkesbury trip (6th March) were lower than anticipated. The medieval Bristol trip on 3rd April was under-subscribed, and needed to be re-advertised. It was

noted that the date clashed with a popular u3a away day, and in future such clashes should be avoided.
ACTION: Patrick to check future dates against Chepstow u3a planned excursions.

(ii) The rearranged River Avon boat trip would now take place on 24th June. Details would need to be confirmed with the Bristol Packet company by 31st May. Patrick noted that he would be away between April and June.
ACTION: Guy to circulate details to members. Marion to coordinate booking arrangements in Patrick's absence.

(iii) Lloyds Bank had stated that the excursions account would now be a fee-paying "Community Account", rather than a free charity account. Patrick suggested that this should be challenged.
ACTION: David to raise this with Lloyds Bank.

(iv) Patrick asked for a levy of £1 per person per trip, to cover his expenses. This was AGREED

5. End of Second World War – 80th anniversary

Patrick noted that there would be local events taking place to celebrate the 80th anniversaries of VE Day (8th May) and VJ Day (15th August).
Discussion followed on how the Society should be involved. John proposed that the Society become involved in events organised by the town council, including a planned event in the Drill Hall.
Guy suggested that it would be possible to scan images from the 'Wartime Memories' document, which was now effectively out of print although some copies were still on sale. Annie suggested that it might be possible to use original images held by the Museum, and would make enquiries. Images could be made into a slideshow to be projected in the hall, if this was acceptable to the town council, but it would not be practicable to mount a fixed exhibition in the time available.
ACTION: John to contact the town council about arrangements for commemorating the anniversaries, in particular whether it would be possible to present a slideshow.
ACTION: Annie and Guy to look at the possibility of scanning either original images or those from 'Wartime Memories', and then put together a slideshow with John's involvement.

6. Officers' reports

(i) Chair

Nothing to add.

(ii) Secretary

Nothing to add.

(iii) Treasurer

David circulated the most recent accounts. A question arose over how Gift Aid was taken into account.
ACTION: Angela to provide David with a list of participating members.

(iv) Membership

Angela had reported in writing that several new members had joined at recent meetings.

7. Arrangements for AGM, 21st May

Marion noted that she would be away on that day; Sallie had offered to handle the administration. The timetable was considered.

ACTION: Nominations for President would be sought through the members' bulletin, with a closing date of 15th April, and AGM papers would be circulated by 23rd April.

8. Publications report

Guy said that he had looked into the possibility of scanning, digitising and making available online some of the Society's historic publications, including those written by Ivor Waters, and was in contact with John Waters about this. There was uncertainty over whether digitised documents were better held on the Society's website or in cloud storage, and over the number of documents that could potentially be involved. Documents would need to be searchable, and indexed.

ACTION: Guy to draw up a list of historic Chepstow Society documents and, with Annie, establish their availability and priorities for digitisation.

Annie and Nicky said that potentially there could be grants available to help with this work. Guy said that he had contacted a consultant archivist, who had offered to undertake initial scoping and advisory work at a cost of £1200.

ACTION: Guy, Annie and Simon to draw up a project brief for further work on this, and report to the next committee meeting.

ACTION: Guy to report back on whether the "Chepstow Story" booklet should be updated or revised more fully.

9. Drill Hall fees

John reported that fees for hiring the hall, both for monthly meetings and committee meetings, were to increase, but that the town council had indicated informally that grants would be available to offset at least some of the increases.

ACTION: John to make a formal request to the town council for a grant to offset the increased hall hire charges.

10. Zoom meetings

ACTION: John to continue to investigate options.

11. Any other business

There was none.

12. Next meeting: Wednesday 7th May at 7 pm.

ACTION: Agenda items to include summer walks programme.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.