The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 27 October 2007

Upstairs Room, The Lamb, Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC1

Present: Patric Dickinson (Chairman), John Graham, Dr Derek Hawes, Dr Michael Helm, Stephen Holden (Trustee), Dr David Lowis, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon. Archivist), Alastair Morrison, Paul Nutley, Caroline Shaw, Victor Spouge, Prof. Michael Swash, Elwin Taylor, Lt-Col. Peter Taylor.

Apologies: Julian Allason (Vice-President), Dr Christine Berberich (Trustee), Dr Nick Birns (Trustee), David Butler, Jill Chalmers, Dr Joanne Edmonds, Dr David Hallett, Philip Holm, Kaarina Huhtala, Josandra Janisch, Hans Johansson, Neville Keery, Dr George Lilley, Simon McArthur, Jeff Manley, Dr Derek Miles (Hon. Treasurer), Pat Miles, Prof. Joanna Montgomery-Byles, Michael Phelps, Prof. John Potter, Stephen Pyskoty-Olle, Prue Raper, Tony Robinson (Trustee), Chloe Teacher, Sharon Turner.

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Patric Dickinson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded us that we were just round the corner from the Powells' first married quarters in Great Ormond Street.
2. The Hon. Secretary had received apologies for absence from those members listed above together with 17 proxy votes to be cast in favour of all the motions.

2. Minutes of 2006 AGM

1. The minutes of the 2006 AGM had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
2. There being no matters arising the minutes were approved unanimously and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Receive the 2007 Annual Report

1. The Annual Report 2007 had been circulated to members in advance and was presented to the meeting by the Hon. Secretary, summarising the key points from his "Secretary's Report".
2. Society membership is stable at around 250; the 30% take-up of the "5years for 4" offer appears to have been a major contributor to this. Satisfyingly we have retained a majority of those members who joined in centenary year.
3. During the reporting year:
   - Simon Russell Beale was elected President
   - Strategy Review was completed and the results published in the *Newsletter*.

- Most notable event was the Paul Guinery music evening in February 2007.
- The first issue of the Society's journal, *Secret Harmonies*, was published in October 2006.
- The *Newsletter* is maintaining its size (which had been expected to reduce slightly because of the journal) and interest.

4. Looking forward at the end of the reporting year (31 March 2007) there were a number of events on the horizon:
   - Publication of Centenary Conference Proceedings (completed August 2007)
   - 4th Biennial Conference, 2007 at Bath (completed 8-9 September 2007)
   - Inaugural Anthony Powell Lecture (in association with Wallace Collection) on 17 November 2007 to be given by Tariq Ali.
   - Further publications: "*Dance* for Readers" talks and Jeff Manley's "Guide to Music in *Dance*" are in the pipeline.
   - 5th Biennial Conference, 2009 in Washington, DC.
5. In response to a question from the floor the Hon. Secretary replied that there was no one good way to increase membership. The majority of new members are currently joining because of the website, and conferences always help. Our experience is that advertising is not a cost effective option.
6. The Annual Report 2006 was accepted unanimously.

4. Accounts Year Ending 31 March 2007

1. In the unexpected absence of the Hon. Treasurer due to illness the Hon. Secretary briefly presented the accounts for the last period. These were printed as part of the Annual Report.
2. In a departure from tradition it has been decided to present the current year's accounts together with the previous two years as conferences in alternate years paint false comparisons.
3. As the year's income and expenditure were both under £10,000 the accounts have not needed to be independently examined. They do however contain the fees for last year's examination.
4. During the year the Society recorded a profit of £3544. This profit is in large part due to forward liabilities accruing from the "5 years for 4" membership offer and will be used to both service this liability and to underwrite some of the risks inherent in future events.
5. There being no further questions the accounts were unanimously approved.

5. Election of Executive Officers

1. Patric Dickinson is standing down after 4 years as Chairman. The meeting recorded thanks to Patric for his sterling work, especially in steering us successfully through Powell's centenary year.
2. The following were nominated as Officers:
   Chairman: Dr Christine Berberich
   Hon. Secretary: Dr Keith C Marshall
   Hon. Treasurer: Dr Derek Miles
3. There being no other nominations these candidates were elected unopposed.

6. Election of Executive Committee Members

1. Leatrice Fountain is standing down after many years as a trustee. The meeting recorded thanks to Leatrice for her work, especially in organising the NE USA Local Group.
2. The following were nominated as Executive Committee Members: Dr Nicholas Birns, Stephen Holden, Jeffrey Manley, Antony Robinson and Elwin Taylor.
3. There being no other nominations these candidates were elected unopposed.

7. Questions from the Floor

1. Thanks were also recorded to Patric Dickinson for organising the Widmerpool visit held earlier in 2007.
2. The Hon. Secretary reported briefly the preliminary results of feedback from the Bath Conference:
   - Conference was very satisfactorily received with a 77% satisfaction index.
   - The biggest criticism was of the catering and the university venue.
   - The cost appears to have been about right for most delegates.
   - Three-quarters of respondents expect to attend the 2009 Washington conference.
   - Members prefer conferences at weekends.
   - Feedback suggests that conferences are 2 day events with a day of conference and a day of events.

   It was also noted that we need to plan and budget for manning the registration desk all day.

   Support was expressed for a conference in Venice and for another play reading.
3. The Hon. Secretary floated the idea of changing the constitution to elect a board of 6-9 trustees, who would then elect the officers from amongst themselves; one third of the board would stand for re-election every year. This was generally well received, a number of members having had positive experiences of such a system elsewhere. The Trustees will consider this further and seek approval from the Charity Commission prior to bringing any motion for change to an AGM.
4. Patric Dickinson concluded by expressing the hope that we might pay more attention to marking Powell anniversaries, *eg*. book publication dates.
5. The 2008 AGM will be on the afternoon of Saturday 25 October, venue to be decided.

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The formal business was followed by a talk **Anthony Powell and the Heralds** by Patric Dickinson; the text will be published in a future issue of *Secret Harmonies*.