The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Saturday 19 October 2013

Conference Room, St James's Church

Piccadilly, London, W1

Present: Christine Apperley, Jill Barton, John Blaxter, Robin Bynoe, Jill Chalmers, Patric Dickinson (Vice-President), John Hardy, Eddie Hathaway, John Heald, Dr George Lilley, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon. Archivist), Dr Michael Helm, Michael Meredith, Julian Miller, Sandy Morrison, Harry Mount, Gerald Parsons, David Pattison, Dr Peter Payan, Prue Raper, Dr Bernard Stacey

Apologies: Julian Allason (Vice-President), Paul Guinery, Dr Catherine Hoffmann, Stephen Holden (Trustee), Philip Holm, Dr John Horton, Kaarina Huhtala, Neville Keerey, Simon McArthur, Dr Derek Miles (Hon. Treasurer), Pat Miles, Steve Olle, Graham Page, Regina Rehbinder, Antony Robinson (Trustee), Prof. John Roe (Trustee), Elizabeth Savidge, Benjamin Smith, Elwin Taylor (Trustee), Susan Taylor, Stephen Walker, Dr Jeremy Warren (Vice-President)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

1. In the absence of several Trustees, mostly due to illness, the meeting was chaired by Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary) who welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.
2. Apologies for absence are recorded above.
3. Fourteen proxy votes had been received; eleven in favour of all the motions and three which were open.

2. Minutes of the 2012 AGM

1. The minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated in the Spring 2013 *Newsletter*; copies were also available at the meeting.
2. The minutes of the 2012 AGM were unanimously approved and duly signed by Keith Marshall as Chairman of the meeting.

3. Annual Report 2013

1. Keith Marshall presented the 2013 Annual Report and highlighted:
   - Another small increase in membership with approximately 40% of members taking advantage of the "5 years for 4" membership offer.
   - Highlight of the year was the 2012 Annual Lecture, 'Think First, Fight Afterwards', given by AN Wilson at the Wallace Collection on 30 November. As in other years the lecture was completely sold out and was very successful. The text will be published in the upcoming issue of the journal, *Secret Harmonies*.

- Bequest of Powell books from the family of member Terry Empson (died May 2012) which now form part of the Society's Archive.
- Continuing strength of local groups, especially London and New York.
- Continuing strength of the quarterly *Newsletter* which is never less than 32 pages.
- 2013 calendar, which although universally liked, had made a loss and a repeat could not be justified. However keeping reserve monies allows such experiments.
- Work towards 2013 conference held at Eton College on 27-29 September 2013. A much appreciated grant towards the conference from Derek Hill Foundation. This grant was largely due to the work of our President, Lord Gowrie, who is also a Trustee of the Foundation.

2. Although subsequent to the end of the year being reported, Keith Marshall provided a brief report on the recent conference at Eton College.
   - Total of 93 delegates, of whom 85 had paid delegate fees.
   - "Bring and Buy" Book Sale raised over £900 towards the Westminster Green Plaque to be placed at 44 Ashley Gardens, Powell's birthplace.
   - Eton College was very generous and helpful in many ways, and Keith expressed many thanks to Michael Meredith in particular.
   - Although many of the bills have yet to arrive the indications are that the conference will probably break even and, as usual, had attracted a handful of new members.
   - As always there is a continuing need to watch expenses like postage and printing. Bernard Stacey asked about the use of e-mails to save costs. Keith replied that both e-mail and ordinary mail are used: people don't always respond to (or even read) e-mail, so a repeat approach is best.
     George Lilley asked about presentation skills of those giving papers (also a concern for some of those who filled in feedback forms). Keith replied that speakers are always told that it's preferable to speak rather than read aloud, and that the few who do need to read are asked to do so clearly. John Blaxter suggested that it usually works better if comment about this is made at the time by the session chairman.
   - Feedback from the conference delegates was the best for any of our conferences.
3. Looking ahead Keith highlighted:
   - 2013 Annual Lecture at the Wallace Collection, 'Anthony Powell and Sculpture' on 6 December. The speaker is Alastair Laing, former Curator of Pictures & Sculpture at the National Trust. Tickets are selling well.
   - The London Group AP Birthday Lunch is on 7 December; and the New York Birthday Lunch is on 13 December.
   - Hon. Secretary's New Year Brunch in London will take place on 18 January 2014. The Hon Secretary asked that anyone wishing to attend either of the UK events let him know for table booking purposes.
   - The 2015 Conference is being planned by member David Ball, who is an experienced conference organiser. The preferred locations are Oxford and London. Further news when available.
   - Venice Weekend. This is planned for mid-October 2014. Accommodation has been arranged at the Cini Foundation, which is where AP attended the conference subsequently used as the backdrop in *Temporary Kings*. Places will be limited to 30. Attendees will be responsible for their own travel. *Dates are 9-11 October 2014; booking details are expected around Easter 2014.*
     John Heald asked if it would be possible to stay at other hotels. Keith replied that

given the nature of the negotiations with the Cini Foundation, and the fact that they are offering accommodation at attractive rates, this is not preferred, but it will be suggested to the organising team. **Action: Keith** *Question posed of the organisers.* Julian Miller asked if it would be restricted to AP Society members. Keith replied that he expected the event to be open, and places available on a first come first served basis.

4. The Hon Secretary reminded members that there was still a desperate need for volunteers to help with aspects of the Society's work, particularly membership, merchandise and the website.
   David Pattison remarked that the Betjeman Society and some others combine the offices of Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Keith said that he would be loath to ask Derek Miles, the Society's Treasurer, to do this, given that he is sometimes out of the country, which would make it difficult to deal with membership matters in a timely way. With the AP Society it seems to be more natural to combine membership and merchandise, both of which Keith has had to take back in the absence of anyone to take over when Graham and Dorothy Davie had to stand down.
   John Heald suggested that it is often convenient for the wife of the person doing the membership to deal with the merchandise: the Hon Archivist explained that in this case it would make no difference, since she already assists the Hon. Secretary in his work, as well as looking after the Archive.
   Robin Bynoe asked about the volume of the merchandise: it takes up about a dozen crates.
   John Heald asked about the Society's Archive. Keith explained its size and emphasised that it is available to any *bona fide* researcher.
   Sandy Morrison asked why membership subscriptions in advance (*eg*. "5 years for 4") appeared to be a problem. Surely it wasn't regretted? Keith agreed that it was not regretted at all, but it does mean money is needed to service those memberships in future years and that has to be kept aside as reserve funds.
   Sandy also asked about why it was a problem when people bought tickets for the Annual Lecture but neither attended nor notified the Society of this, since it was not a monetary loss for the Society (though he did realise that the tickets could be sold again). Keith replied that the main problem is that it makes for disappointed customers as there is often a lengthy waiting list for tickets.
   John Heald asked where else the *Newsletter* and the journal were available. Keith replied that copies were sent to the Copyright Libraries (a legal requirement) and also to the London Library, Georgetown University Library (Washington DC), Eton College Library, Travellers' Club and Balliol College, Oxford.
   John also felt that Keith had undersold the calendar in apologising for the binding: easily removable pages being an advantage in his opinion.
   Prue Raper asked if it would be possible for the Society to get a list of those who had attended the AP event at the Cheltenham Literary Festival. Patric Dickinson (who had chaired the session) said that he thought this unlikely, but that the organisers had handed out lots of the membership leaflets which we had supplied.
5. The Annual Report was unanimously accepted.

4. Accounts 2012-2013

1. In the absence of the Hon. Treasurer [*who had encountered an unexpected lack of trains to London*] Keith Marshall presented the Treasurer's Report and accounts.
2. Overall the Society is in a healthy position with a small surplus and useful reserves.

3. Again there is no requirement to increase subscriptions at present.
4. John Heald asked if membership cards served any purpose. Keith replied that they are no longer issued because they did indeed not fulfil any useful purpose.
5. The Accounts were unanimously accepted.

5. Election of Patric Dickinson as a Vice-President

1. Under the Constitution, Vice-presidents have to be re-elected every five years. The Trustees were therefore proposing Patric Dickinson be re-elected for a further five years, and in doing so Keith thanked Patric for his heroic work for the Society, particularly as a past Chairman and present organiser of speakers for the Annual Lecture.
2. Patric was duly unanimously re-elected.

6. Election of Trustees

1. Three Trustees retired by rotation: Dr Christine Berberich, Dr Derek Miles and Elwin Taylor.
2. Christine had decided to stand down as a Trustee. Both Derek and Elwin agreed to continue and had been duly nominated by the other Trustees.
3. Harry Mount, Anthony Powell's great-nephew, was also nominated as a Trustee.
4. In the absence of other nominations, Derek, Elwin and Harry were duly elected unopposed.

7. Any Other Business

1. John Heald mentioned that he had recently seen a good collection of paintings by Derek Hill, whose charitable Foundation had given a grant towards the cost of the recent Conference.

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The formal AGM business was followed by a talk
Lady Violet Powell and Her World
by Georgia Powell in conversation with Harry Mount

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
21 November 2013

With thanks to Noreen Marshall for the notes and for drafting the minutes.
Post-meeting updates in ***underscored italic***.