The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Saturday 22 October 2016

Conference Room, St James's Church, Piccadilly, London, W1

Present: Christine Apperley, Nicholas Ashley, Peter Brunning, Robin Bynoe (Chairman), Pat Chambers, Patric Dickinson (Vice-President), Colin Donald, Lord Gowrie (President), Edward Hathaway, Richard Jenkins, Dr David Lowis, Dr Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon. Archivist), Julian Miller, Paul Milliken, Graham Page (Hon. Treasurer), Derek Pasquill, Prue Raper, Prof. John Roe (Trustee), Benjamin Smith, Dr Bernard Stacey, John Stewart, Elwin Taylor (Trustee), Susan Taylor, John Trotter, Alison Walker (Publisher), Stephen Walker (Editor and Social Secretary), George Warren, Mary-Lou Weddeburn

Apologies: John Blaxter, Jill Chalmers, Paul Denman, John Heald, Dr Catherine Hoffmann, Phillip Holm, Philip Ivory, Neville Keerey, Dr George Lilley, Jeffrey Manley (Trustee), Dr Derek Miles (Trustee), Pat Miles, Gerald Parsons, Tony Robinson (Trustee), Elizabeth Savidge, Hilary Spurling, Ian Taylor

1. Introduction & Apologies for Absence

1. The Chairman, Robin Bynoe, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending; he also paid tribute to Tony Robinson, his predecessor as Chairman.
2. Robin believes the Society has three main priorities for the future:
    1. never to lose sight of our charity's obligations – to celebrate Anthony Powell and keep him in front of the public
    2. to attract more members, including more young members
    3. as Keith warns every year, after January 2021 he does not wish to be an officer of the Society.
3. Robin himself has taken on the merchandise and Stephen Walker the editorship of the *Newsletter*; the last two conferences have been led by other people (although with Keith's help); Alison Walker has taken over the publishing with the purpose of clearing the backlog (two issues of *Secret Harmonies* and the proceedings of the last three conferences). The *Newsletter* has flourished into something like a journal; Stephen and Alison are revamping its appearance with professional help: the next issue will be out in December. Robin pointed out that it was important to have the Society's publications look as professional as possible, partly to attract younger members.
4. Attendees were asked to record their names on the attendance sheet.
5. Apologies received are recorded above.
6. The Chairman and Hon. Secretary held between them ten proxy votes.

2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 2015 AGM

1. The minutes of the 2015 AGM (previously circulated) were agreed by the members present. Robin signed the minutes.

3. Annual Report 2015-2016

1. Keith Marshall presented the Annual Report for the year 2015-16 and ran through the significant events.
   - As in the previous year there had been a small decrease in membership despite quite a few new and returning members. The "5 years for 4" membership offer is taken up by around 40% of members.
   - Graham Page had taken over from Derek Miles as Hon Treasurer as planned.
   - Stephen Lloyd's delayed Anthony Powell Lecture on Constant Lambert and his friendship with Anthony Powell took place.
     The Wallace Collection Subsequently indicated they would no longer host the event. The next lecture has been deferred to 2017, partly due to problems agreeing dates with speakers.
   - There had been major work for the 2016 Conference in York, which had been highly successful.
     Feedback was very much along the usual lines of 'the best Conference yet'.
     Keith thanked John and Christine Roe and Noreen Marshall for their organisational efforts.
     Keith and John were working on the Proceedings, which would be going to Alison in early 2017 for publication.
   - Other events during the year have been successful and enjoyed by those attending.
   - As mentioned above, the quarterly *Newsletter* continues to flourish; it is now regularly 40 pages and Stephen Walker has plans for further possible expansion.
   - The Society's local groups in London and New York are flourishing. Other groups meet occasionally.
   - Work is still in progress on a City of Westminster commemorative plaque in Shepherd Market but progress is slow.
2. Keith formally thanked all those who had contributed their time and done things for the Society during the year: without their efforts we wouldn't be here.
3. Looking forward:
   - Work has already started on the next Conference, targeted for Oxford in 2018, but it needs someone to take charge of the project.
   - Vice-President Patric Dickinson is working on finding a speaker and venue for the Annual Lecture
   - The end of the publishing backlog is in sight.
   - 2016 AP Birthday Lunches will take place on 3 December in London and 16 December in New York; the Hon. Secretary's New Year Brunch is on 21 January 2017.
4. Echoing Robin's comments, Keith's biggest concerns are: membership numbers; volunteers to do things; succession planning for when he stands down as Hon. Secretary in just over four years' time.
5. Lord Gowrie asked if it would be possible to keep the Annual Lecture at the Wallace Collection by the Society paying for the venue. Keith replied that he didn't know but thought it an idea worth pursuing, especially as the Directorship is changing (Dr Xavier Bray replacing Dr Christoph Vogtherr); he added that Jeremy Warren knows Dr Bray, and feels that he may be receptive.
6. Lord Gowrie asked Keith how much it was likely to cost. Keith replied that his recollection was that it was several thousand pounds just for the Wallace Collection's lecture theatre. He also felt that it would be difficult to make it pay on £15-£20 per ticket (which is what members say they will pay). In the past the Wallace provided their lecture theatre (and security staff and catering contractors) and the wine in

exchange for 95% of the ticket revenue; the Society has provided the speaker, the ticketing and contributed to dinner for the speaker afterwards.
7. Robin commented that the Lecture didn't necessarily need a venue like the Wallace.
8. John Trotter suggested keeping the ticket at £15 but charging for the wine.
9. Stephen Walker asked if the Society pays the speaker (it doesn't) and wondered whether there would be naming rights involved in changing from the original venue (not obviously).
10. Colin Donald asked about the Westminster green plaque to commemorate AP, and whether there were rules to be followed. Keith replied that Westminster did have rules that had to be followed throughout.
11. The Annual Report was unanimously accepted.
12. A copy of the Report to be lodged with the Charity Commission. **Action: Keith** *Done*

4. Accounts for the Year Ending 31 March 2016

1. Graham began with one significant change he had made to the Society's accounting procedure: to show the income and costs of the 2016 York Conference in the accounts for the 2015-16 financial year since although the event and costs were in 2016-17 the income was in 2015-16.
2. He felt that it was important to keep income from events and membership separate, since events were generally budgeted to break even. Membership and servicing members (*eg*. *Newsletter*, website, basic admin, those things required legally) were core operations of the Society with a small profit margin, which was appropriate. On this basis it is estimated income for the last year was £5900 with costs of £5400. The only other element to consider was Gift Aid, which is at the whim of the Government.
3. Interest on the Society's bank accounts was very small, in line with current banking practice.
4. The reserve funds remain healthy, and will be helping to fund the publications backlog, the commemorative plaque; and similar projects.
5. Graham particularly thanked his predecessor Derek Miles; Eddie Hathaway for acting as scrutineer of the Accounts; and Keith for his mastery of the details.
6. Stephen Walker asked about what seemed to him to be a discrepancy in the Accounts between the membership income shown and the £5900 quoted above. Essentially the numbers are constructed differently with allowances for membership paid in advance *etc*. In operational terms £5900 is the more accurate planning figure, but is constructed differently to the accounting figure. Graham suggested that more detail may be needed in the Accounts in future.
7. Stephen Walker also asked (on behalf of member Marshall Hall) what were the plans to use the reserves. Robin agreed that this needed to be looked at. Keith added that having the Reserves enabled projects like new merchandise to proceed quickly and easily; as well as some reserves being ear-marked to cover membership paid in advance, commemorative plaque, publications backlog *etc*.
8. It was suggested that we should give more help to students. Keith replied that this was an area in which we could invest and that he had had informal discussions with students several times over the years but none had ever formally requested any funding.
9. The Accounts were formally accepted and will be lodged with the Charity Commission. **Action: Keith** *Done*

5. President and Vice-Presidents

1. The President and Vice-Presidents are required to be confirmed every five years.
2. This year Lord Gowrie (President), Michael Meredith and Jeremy Warren (Vice-Presidents) have to be re-confirmed.
3. Lord Gowrie indicated that he was happy to continue as President and was unanimously re-confirmed.
4. Michael Meredith and Jeremy Warren had also indicated their willingness to continue as Vice-Presidents and were unanimously re-confirmed.

6. Election of Trustees

1. Derek Miles, Harry Mount and Elwin Taylor had come to the end of their terms as Trustees of the Society. Derek and Harry were happy to continue as Trustees, but Elwin was standing down.
2. Robin formally thanked Elwin for his work and Keith thanked him in particular for organising the Venice Conference when others, himself included, had doubted that it could happen.
3. Colin Donald had been approached to be a Trustee and had agreed.
4. The Trustees nominated Derek Miles, Harry Mount and Colin Donald as Trustees. All three were unanimously elected.
5. Colin briefly introduced himself as an early member of the Society and indicated that he was honoured to be a Trustee.

7. Questions and Comments from the Floor

1. Paul Milliken raised the point that next year will see the twentieth anniversary of the 1997 Channel 4 TV films of *A Dance to the Music of Time* and wondered whether it would be possible to approach members of the cast for their recollections. Keith commented that Simon Russell Beale (Widmerpool) should be approachable; as a Past President he had Honorary Life Membership of the Society and had agreed to unveil the Westminster green plaque. Paul urged that SRB be asked to come to the 2018 Conference.
2. Bernard Stacey reported that he had details of a favourable deal for producing a Society tie at £15 each. Keith asked Bernard to send him details for the Trustees to consider, but to bear in mind that extras such as VAT, delivery charges will inflate that price.

After a short break for refreshments, the afternoon concluded with a Bring and Buy Book Sale in place of the usual talk. The book sale made over £250 for the Society.

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
2 December 2016

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