The Anthony Powell Society

Registered Charity No.: 1096873

Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Saturday 21 October 2017

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

Present: Christine Apperley, John Blaxter, Robin Bynoe (Chairman), Pat Chambers, Alfred Ellis, Marshall Hall, Eddie Hathaway, Michael Helm, David Lowis, Keith Marshall (Hon. Secretary), Noreen Marshall (Hon. Archivist), Derek Miles (Trustee), Julian Miller, Graham Page (Hon. Treasurer), Derek Pasquill, Elwin Taylor, Susan Taylor, John Trotter, Alison Walker (Publisher), Stephen Walker (Editor and Social Secretary), George Warren

Apologies: Christine Berberich, Peter Brunning, Jill Chalmers, Jilly Cooper, Paul Denman, Patric Dickinson (Vice-President), Colin Donald (Trustee), Phillip Holm, Philip Ivory, Neville Keery, Adrian Lower, Jeffrey Manley (Trustee), Simon McArthur, Pat Miles, Tim Sanderson, Elizabeth Savidge, Benjamin Smith

1. Introduction

1. The Chairman, Robin Bynoe, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.
2. For the second year running Robin paid tribute to Trustee Tony Robinson, his predecessor as Chairman, who had died on 3 September. Robin thanked Tony for all he had done and offered his condolences to Tony's wife Susan and the family.
   Keith added that Tony had provided many quiet words of wisdom, and had done most of the work that had achieved charitable status for the Society in 2003.
   Keith had written to Tony's wife Susan, on behalf of the Society, expressing our gratitude and condolences.
3. At last year's AGM Robin said the Society had three main priorities for the future: to celebrate AP; to attract more members (he commented that Hilary Spurling's new biography of AP was likely to be influential there, as she had said that it aimed partly at the young); and to secure Keith's functions before he retires as Hon. Secretary in January 2021.
   Keith had now decided to bring forward his retirement to the 2018 AGM. Robin suggested the priority must now be dealing with the succession. He warned that this would not be just one person, and a start had been made on breaking down the functions into basic groups:
   - Webmaster
   - Membership Secretary: a major part of this is to do with incoming moneys and Keith is currently the only person with access to PayPal, the Society's chosen method of handling payments
   - Conference Organisation, especially the "back office" work, which Keith wishes to hand on now
   - Organisation of the Annual Lectures, as Patric Dickinson is now standing down
   - Secretarial/administrative/legal aspects of the work, such as dealing with the Charity Commission; public enquiries; minutes of meetings *etc*.

4. Robin thanked everyone who had worked for the Society, especially Stephen and Alison for tackling the backlog of publications, Graham for his work as Hon. Treasurer, Patric for the Lectures and Noreen for a variety of tasks.
5. Robin and Keith were holding 11 proxy votes – mostly in favour of the motions with a few left open.
6. Apologies are recorded above.

2. To Confirm the Minutes of the 2016 AGM

1. The minutes of the 2016 AGM were unanimously agreed and Robin signed them.

3. To Receive the 2017 Annual Report

1. Keith presented the Annual Report and ran through the significant events.
2. There had been a small increase in membership for the first time in several years. Approximately 40% of members take advantage of the "5 years for the price of 4" offer.
3. The 2016 Conference in York had been highly successful, and hugely enjoyed by all. Keith thanked John and Christine Roe for all their hard work. The proceedings had been published earlier this year as planned.
4. Other events included the Annual Members' Day Out to Oxford; Clive Gwatkin Jenkins and Stephen Walker were thanked for their organisation. Ivan Hutnik's annual London Summer Stroll. AP Birthday Lunches in London and New York and the Hon. Secretary's New Year Brunch. In addition to the usual London pub meets an additional three had been arranged to welcome visiting overseas members.
5. The quarterly *Newsletter* continues to flourish and has had a professionally designed makeover.
6. Keith also mentioned the project to photographically record AP's collages in the boiler room of The Chantry. Robin, who had organised the work, would be speaking about it at the end of the meeting.
7. The publishing backlog has almost been cleared over the last year and Keith thanked Alison for her dogged determination in making this happen.
8. The Society's local groups, particularly those in London and New York, are still going strong, and Keith thanked all those who were involved.
9. Turning to the present year, Keith also mentioned Tony Robinson's untimely recent death and paid further tribute to all his work on the Society's behalf.
10. Recent Society events had included an updated reprise of Ivan Hutnik's first London Summer Stroll around Regent's Canal.
    The Radnorshire Weekend had been very much enjoyed and Keith proposed a huge vote of thanks to John Blaxter for organising it.
    The Conference Proceedings for Venice (2014) and York (2016) had been published, as had *AP on Wine* and Bernard Stacey's *War Dance*.
11. Looking forward:
    - The next event will be Hilary Spurling's lecture on her biography of AP at the Wallace Collection on Saturday 28 October. This will be followed by a rescheduled Pub Meet. The biography had attracted a considerable number of reviews, almost all favourable. Keith added that although bookings on the Wallace's website had been closed, this had been premature, and there were still a few tickets available.
    - The Society's Annual Lecture is at the Travellers Club on Wednesday 6 December, with Alexander Waugh speaking about "Wavian Reactions to Anthony Powell". It is hoped the Travellers Club will become the regular venue for the Annual Lecture. The Society's allocation of 80 tickets had almost sold out, although it was not

known whether the Travellers Club still had any of its allocation of 30; George Warren, a member of the Travellers Club, offered to find out.

- Issue 8 of the Society's journal *Secret Harmonies* is in preparation.
- This year's London AP Birthday Lunch is on Saturday 2 December at Malabar Junction in Great Russell Street.
- The Hon. Secretary's New Year Brunch is on Saturday 13 January 2018; central London venue to be confirmed. Noreen canvassed opinion among those present about a return to Patisserie Valerie's Knightsbridge branch; the response was in favour.
- The major Society event of 2018 will be the Conference at Merton College, Oxford from Friday 31 August to Sunday 2 September; the theme is "AP and the Visual Arts".
- Keith is negotiating with the technology charity Agile Ventures for a rebuild of the Society's website and a new membership database. Both projects need to be finished before Keith stands down as Secretary.

12. Keith briefly spoke about his decision to stand down as Hon. Secretary earlier than originally planned. By the 2018 AGM he will have been Secretary for over 18 years, which he felt was too long for the good of any one person or the organisation. He added that he felt his cautious approach had served the Society well in its earlier years, but might now be inhibiting the more adventurous approach needed in the future.
13. The Annual Report was unanimously accepted. *The report has been lodged with the Charity Commission as legally required*.

4. To Receive the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017

1. The Society's Accounts had been drawn up and had been approved by the Trustees.
2. The income and expenditure was considerably lower than the previous year due to there not having been a conference or lecture to be accounted for.
3. The accounts are on a cash-received basis and remain healthy. The net assets had increased by almost £3000.
4. There were the usual necessary adjustments in connection with the "5 years for 4" membership offer.
5. There were also some anticipated costs, notably the £2200 for the Westminster Green plaque to commemorate AP, the money for dealing with the publications backlog, and the expected (but as yet not received despite John Roe's best efforts) invoice from the University of York in connection with the 2016 Conference.
6. Graham explained that the 2017-18 Accounts would include the two lectures, several publications and the Radnorshire weekend, but not the 2018 Conference.
7. Graham briefly referred to the question from last year's AGM about plans for using the Society's cash reserves. Photography of AP's collages and the necessary rebuild of the website and membership database are areas where reserve moneys are required. Keith reminded everybody that the Society has to take the cost of any publication up front and may never fully recover that cost – pricing aims to recover the cost if all available copies are sold. However, for example, the merchandise stock still includes copies of the Proceedings of the first Conference at Eton in 2001.
8. Michael Helm asked about the Shawbrook bank account mentioned in the Accounts. Graham explained that it was an interest-bearing account, recommended by Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), to which we had moved money when CAF had removed the interest from its accounts and introduced charges.

9. In response to various questions, Graham explained that although the 2016 conference income and expenditure had spanned financial years both had been taken in the year ending 2016; this is acceptable accounting practice provided it is applied consistently.
10. The moneys from both Gift Aid and Merchandise Sales having increased, Graham was asked if the Society made best use of Gift Aid. He gave assurances that we did and that HMRC was very prompt with the payment of Gift Aid. Keith added that very few UK members had not made a Gift Aid declaration (the scheme applies to UK taxpayers only). In passing round the Hon. Secretary's top hat for contributions, Keith explained that we were also able to claim Gift Aid on this money.
11. Keith also commented on the discrepancy between the membership subscription income between the last two year's accounts. This was entirely due to the timing of subscription reminders and the consequent payments which always fell across financial year end.
12. Graham also noted a small error in the 2016 accounts which had been corrected this year, and for which he apologised.
13. The Accounts were formally accepted. *The accounts have been lodged with the Charity Commission as legally required*.

5. To Elect up to Four Trustees of the Society for a term of three years

1. Robin Bynoe, Jeffrey Manley, Graham Page and Prof. John Roe had come to the end of their terms as Trustees of the Society. All were standing for re-election and had been nominated *en bloc* by the other Trustees. No further nominations had been received by the appointed date of 7 August 2017. All four were duly re-elected to serve until the 2020 AGM.
2. Keith added that because Tony Robinson's death had taken place after the nomination date of 7 August, the Trustee vacancy left could not be formally filled until the 2018 AGM. It would, however, be possible to co-opt somebody to the Executive, if required.

6. Questions from the floor

1. Stephen Walker asked for brief written reactions from anybody who had already read Hilary Spurling's new biography of AP, for inclusion in the next *Newsletter*, which would be a "Biography Special"; copy deadline 11 November.
2. Keith proposed that next year's AGM be followed by a pub quiz, as something different: this suggestion was also well received.

After a short break for refreshments, Robin Bynoe concluded the afternoon with a talk "Anthony Powell Off Duty: Collages and Wine". This included an explanation from Hugh Gilbert on his method of photographing the Boiler Room collages.

The Hon Secretary's top hat collected £28.15 in donations, on which Gift Aid will be claimed.

Dr Keith C Marshall
Hon. Secretary
20 November 2017

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