

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2024 – 11:00 am

United Reformed Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon

MINUTES OF MEETING

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Rob Hall, Chairman – Dave Newland, Vice Chairman – John Gibbons, Treasurer – Maggie Mahoney, Secretary – Judy Dumbrill. Chris Hall, Website Manager.

1. OPENING REMARKS

Rob Hall opened the meeting at 11:05 am by welcoming the 10 Members present to the AGM of Croydon Aviva Fellowship which is now in its 22nd year as it is the only formal occasion when Members are able to ask questions and make suggestions. Rob went on to say that much to his surprise he had enjoyed his first year as Chair and had not found the role at all onerous. He thanked Maggie for her assistance in helping him find his way and Dave Newland for providing a safety net as Vice Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Committee Members Viv Murray, Joan Price and Pauline Wynn. Members Ann Cann, Martin Green, John Greengrass, Hilary Kearney and Julie Woodland also conveyed their apologies.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting were distributed together with the Agenda prior to the meeting. They were accepted as a true summary with no questions arising.

The Minutes were proposed by Ann Westerman and seconded by Judy Dumbrill.

There were no votes against.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Rob opened his report by saying 2023 had been a year of continued recovery following Covid lockdowns but we had been able to fully re-instate our popular lunches and coffee mornings due to support from Members. Our Chartwell coffee morning will be reviewed after this July's visit due to previous low attendance.

Chris House passed away in June having dedicated his retirement years to the Fellowship and our New Year lunch raffle profits of £285.00 were donated to St. Christopher's Hospice in Chris' memory. Rob also mentioned the recent passing away of Roger Smith who, whilst not a Committee Member, organised and led numerous walks for us. Both these gentlemen made significant contributions to our regular activities.

We had excellent visits to the Museum of Brands, organised by John Gibbons, our Treasurer, and to the Natural History Museum and Tate Modern, both organised by Judy Dumbrill.

We commenced a "Toby Brunch" in October which had an encouraging start so we will continue with these to measure their popularity. We are planning a Toby Breakfast at the Redhill branch on 23 April hoping it will appeal to local Members who find Croydon inconvenient or difficult to get to.

Judy Dumbrell is standing down from the Committee after 18 years of valuable service to the Fellowship as a Committee Member and Event Organiser. David Newland is also standing down from the Committee and his role as Newsletter Editor. David has been a Committee Member for 6 years, Event Organiser for 19 years and Newsletter Editor for 14 years.

Until a replacement Newsletter Editor is found we cannot say when the next Newsletter will be issued but we will, of course, keep Members advised of events via the website and email.

Rob stated these are both commendable records and thanked both Judy and David for their considerable contribution to the smooth running of Croydon Fellowship. However, their involvement will not cease as David intends to continue leading his strolls and Judy has agreed to organise a return visit to the “Wildlife Photographer of the Year” exhibition. Those who attended last year thought it was outstanding and requested a return visit.

The departure of Judy and David leaves us very light on Committee Members and will inevitably result in fewer organised visits. We really need a replacement Newsletter Editor and Event Organisers, and any help would be greatly appreciated. Event Organisers do not have to be a Committee Member and Rob thanked Hilary Kearney for stepping forward to organise our planned trip to Eel Pie Island Museum on 17 July.

New Committee Members would be warmly welcomed, and Rob asked them to form an orderly queue at the end of the meeting to express their interest.

Rob advised the Fellowship had not been immune to rising prices over the last few years and the Committee had concluded the level of subsidies made to our lunches was unsustainable in that we could no longer afford to provide a free drink, alcoholic or otherwise. However, it does not mean subsidies have been withdrawn entirely and will continue to be applied where possible.

Finally, Rob thanked Maggie for the substantial support she had given him over the last year as he had been learning the ropes. He also thanked John Gibbons for his excellent work looking after our money and Viv Murray for keeping a tight rein on our membership records.

There were no questions from the floor.

5. TREASURER’S REPORT

John advised our 2023 expenditure exceeded our income by £3,909.34 indicating the surplus funds built up during the Covid period have now more or less been used up. The accounts have been signed off and were submitted to Head Office in January.

The accounts, which were circulated before the meeting, were proposed by Dave Newland, seconded by Chris Hall and accepted unanimously.

In 2023 we held 7 lunches, our New Year Lunch at Croham Hurst Golf Club, with 87 attendees, 2 at the Horseshoe in Warlingham, with 35 & 39 attendees, 2 Italian lunches in Croydon with 37 & 32 attendees, and 2 lunches at McDermott’s in Forestdale with 32 & 36 attendees. All the lunches received subsidies and a glass of wine, or soft drink, a tea or coffee plus gratuities. As you all should know by now going forward we can no longer afford to offer a free glass of wine or soft drink with meals.

We also held 21 coffee mornings and the ones at Croydon Clocktower Café and Knights Garden Centre were free to members. Tea and coffee were also free at the Toby Carvery breakfasts. Free coffee mornings and the Toby Breakfast coffees are subject to regular review.

We also organised and subsidised 3 visits. The Natural History Museum, to see the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition, with 11 Members. The Museum of Brands with 23 members and Tate Modern with 12 Members. We also held 4 walks but there was no expenditure associated with these.

John thanked everyone associated with organising these events.

The 2023 grant from Aviva remained at £3.00 per member and John claimed a grant of £2,055.00 for our membership of 685 as of 1 January 2023.

Our Christmas / New Year Lunch subsidy of £10 per person for 2022 of £870.00, based on the number of attendees at our lunch in January 2023 has also been claimed. He has also claimed our 2023 Christmas / New Year Lunch subsidy of £15 per person based on the number that attended the recent New Year Lunch and that will appear in the 2024 accounts.

General expenses were higher than last year partly due to cost of printing and posting associated with a Newsletter sent out to all members without internet access, as a way of trying to reconnect with members after the Covid lockdowns, towards the end of last year. Other expenses were kept low, thanks again to the good will of the Committee and volunteers who have not claimed any personal expenses.

No budget has been set for 2024 and events will be subsidised on an event-by-event basis.

Croydon accounts have been holding money for Region 8 since 2010. Currently £207.68 is being held for Region 8 and the financial movements are tracked on a separate spreadsheet.

John thanked all the Committee members for their help and support during the last year, with particular thanks to Maggie for her post event accounting, the accounting of the float and stamps, and for her help with checking and preparing the final accounts. John also thanked Joan and Rob for signing cheques.

There were no questions from the floor.

6. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT – read by Maggie

Viv thanked everyone for coming and reminded them that she volunteered to be Croydon Membership Secretary in 2017 and keeps a record of all our Members details on a database as well as organizing the odd event or two. Viv assured Members their details are securely kept and protected under the General Data Protection Act.

She recently completed a full reconciliation of our database against the records held by XPS in Perth. It takes a lot of time checking through all our Members making sure all details are up to date and the same as XPS. The database is updated throughout the year with details from XPS and the reconciliation is a double check on all the Members of the Croydon Fellowship.

As of today's date, we have 673 Members in Croydon and the surrounding areas, 3 more than last year.

In 2024 so far, we have welcomed 13 new Members, 6 Members have sadly died, 4 Members moved out of our area to Exeter, Plymouth, Brighton or Birmingham, and 3 Members moved address and stayed in our area.

During 2023 we gained 33 new members – 13 more than 2022, 30 Members passed away – sadly 4 more than 2022. 11 members moved address and stayed with Croydon area and 13 members moved address and left Croydon area, 3 more than 2022.

We have 413 Members with email addresses, which is 15 more than 2023, and 135 Members with mobile phones, which is 25 more than last year. We have 3 Members aged 90 (1934) with email addresses and mobile phones showing you are never too old to embrace technology.

Remarkable birthdays in 2024 are, 1 member will be 101 this year, 2 members will be 99 and 10 members will be 90 years old.

Viv's report ended by asking Members to save the dates for the lunches she is organising, Monday 16 September at the Horseshoe and Monday 6 January 2025 at Croham Hurst Golf Club.

Viv looks forward to seeing everyone at the fish & chips lunch.

There were no questions from the floor.

7. NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT

Dave said that as previously he had produced two Newsletters during 2023, one in the spring and the other at the beginning of December. Both ran to 6 pages containing his editorial, formal notices, details of forthcoming events and reports on recent past events. Dave thanked the relevant organisers for providing the reports on the past events.

There was one variation from the normal with the spring edition. Unfortunately, the printed copies had already been dispatched when we learnt of the sad death of Chris House, but he was able to add a note to the copy that appeared on our website. A fuller obituary, kindly provided by our Chairman Rob, appeared in the December copy.

Dave advised that after 14 years he had decided to step down as Newsletter Editor and went on to reminisce about some of the earlier editions. The first one included a Thames cruise, a tour of the Inns of Court and one of Old Palace School together with the notice of the 2012 AGM in Allders. Judy's first report appeared in his second edition and it contained the all-too-common fact that it was pouring with rain. Dave gave special thanks to Judy for her reports which were always comprehensive, and he marvelled at how she managed to retain so much information given by the guides. He sometimes had to jiggle with the layout to fit it all in. Both Dave's Newsletters and those of his predecessor, Philip Talmage, are on the website.

Dave explained that over the years, as we gained more and more email addresses, the number of printed copies has reduced which enabled coloured printing. He started producing about 500 printed copies and an army of helpers was needed to envelope, attach address labels and stamps. We now print about 50, the cost of which has risen enormously, and the enveloping is done by himself, his wife Ann and Maggie. Dave thanked Maggie for all the background work she has done over the years to enable the issuing of the Newsletters, and the Committee for spotting errors and suggesting amendments to his draft copies.

Dave said he hoped someone will come forward to take over the editorship and that he would be very happy to chat to anyone about doing so but it would be theirs to produce as they wished.

Dave ended by thanking everyone for being his avid readers.

There were no questions from the floor.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

The position of Vice Chairman is vacant as Dave Newland is standing down.

a. Vice Chairman – Rob called for a volunteer but there were no nominations from the floor.

9. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Member positions are vacant and Judy Dumbrill is standing down.

a. Committee Members – Joan Price is the only one due for re-election and she has agreed to stand for I more year. Proposed by Dave Newland and seconded by John Gibbons. There were no votes against.

b. Any new volunteers – Rob called for new volunteers but there were no nominations from the floor.

c. Newsletter Editor – unfortunately no-one at the meeting volunteered to take over as Newsletter Editor.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

Rob Hall closed the meeting at 11:35 am
MM/04.04.2024