



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at RBS, 2 St Phillips Place, Birmingham B3 2RB
on Tuesday 15th November 2016 at 6:30pm

Present

President: Cllr Carl Rice, Lord Mayor of Birmingham Chair: Gavin Orton
Members: 34 other trustees and members, as listed at the end of the minutes
Non-members: 2 invited guests

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed trustees and members present and thanked the host firm RBS. Cllr Carl Rice, the Lord Mayor, apologised that the Lady Mayoress could not attend. He said the responsibility of introducing the meeting was a pleasurable one, and he appreciated the work of the BCS over almost 100 years. He hoped during his mayoral year to be planting the 60,000th tree on behalf of Birmingham Tress for Life. Some 25,000 schoolchildren had already thought deeply about their citizenship by participating in the Next Generation Awards. Blue plaques and history plates recognised the contribution of many individuals to the lives of Birmingham people.

He recalled that the BCS had helped to preserve the Burne-Jones windows in St Philip's Cathedral by putting them into temporary storage during the Second World War. He acknowledged the Joseph Chamberlain memorial fountain and other monuments to the leader whose Civic Gospel had earned Birmingham the reputation as the best governed city in the empire, but he regretted the lack of a statue to commemorate the man. Noting that the BCS Centenary Year in 2018 would also mark 100 years of women's right to vote, he pointed out that Winson Green had been prominent in the practice of force feeding suffragettes.

Finally the Lord Mayor, as President of the BCS, looked forward with pride to the future of the Birmingham Civic Society as it executes its new +PLUS strategy.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from 44 members of the Society, 11 of whom had appointed the Chair as their proxy.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 19th November 2015 were approved as a true record.

4 Annual report

The Chair, Gavin Orton, presented the annual report, including the Annual Review booklet which had been circulated with the notice of the meeting.

He thanked those involved with the BCS – including the members of its various Committees, as well as the Past Chair, Deputy Chairmen, Honorary Treasurer, Trustees and Secretary – noting that it was their collective dedication and expertise which provided the Society's energy. He had been glad to host a recent tour of the refurbished Grand Hotel building as a way of thanking all these volunteers.

It was fitting that so many members of BCS had been acknowledged by The Birmingham Post recently as among the 250 most influential people in the city.

The +PLUS strategy had been based on the results of a consultation exercise in March, involving both members and other stakeholders, which had been expertly managed by Santosh and Ajit Rai of Wellside Business.

The Membership Committee had arranged an events programme on the themes of People, Places and Pride. It was aiming to surprise and delight those who took part and had received excellent feedback. An open-top bus tour had been organised in partnership with the Birmingham Architectural Association during Heritage Week.

The Chairman's Debate in September was a new core event, with this year's topic being chosen in response to concerns raised at the previous AGM – *Should Birmingham Become the UK's First Motorless City?* A panel of experts led the debate, and a large proportion of the people attending were new to the BCS. At the Spring Reception for 70 corporate members and their guests, the City Council had presented and discussed Birmingham's growth agenda and supporting plans.

The Citizenship Committee had provided funding for the first time this year to implement the initiatives of the Next Generation Awards winner and runner-up: Bartley Green School and King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls. Jo Dunlop had again been responsible for its organisation.

Birmingham Trees for Life had celebrated its tenth anniversary and arranged for Cllr Ray Hassall, the Deputy Lord Mayor, to plant its 50,000th tree on 15th December. To put this into context the Chair pointed out that New York's Central Park contains a total of about 27,000 trees. Jane Harding continued to manage the planting programme. A campaign to prevent the removal of the last mature London Plane tree on Broad Street near Centenary Square had attracted much popular support.

The Planning Committee's advice was highly respected, partly as a result of the relevant experience of its various professionals. They had met Birmingham's newly-appointed Conservation Officers to discuss approaches to protecting its heritage. The Renaissance Award for the most successful conservation project had been presented by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress to Stirchley Baths.

The Heritage Committee had installed a blue plaque for Kate Elizabeth Bunce at St Alban the Martyr Church in Highgate, and a history plate at Birmingham Moseley Rugby Club. The contents of the BCS archives had been reviewed and documented, and an application was being prepared to the Heritage Lottery Fund for support towards exhibition and publication costs for the Centenary Year.

The Public Art Committee was continuing to support the Birmingham Big Art Project, with a public exhibition of the models submitted by the five shortlisted artists. Other public artworks were also being monitored, in liaison with Birmingham City Council.

The Centenary was to be marked during an 18 months period, celebrating not just what the BCS has already achieved but also its present and future work. A Haywood Award was being established in honour of the distinguished former BCS Secretary.

The Chair proposed a motion to adopt the annual report, which was seconded by Nick Venning and carried unanimously.

5 Annual accounts

The Hon Treasurer, Robin Barnes, presented the annual accounts which had been circulated with the notice of the meeting.

Subscription income had increased compared with last year, with no increase in the price of membership fees. The Centenary Fund still stood at £10,000 and the finances generally were in a healthy state. Donations and grants appeared to have fallen, though funds raised in 2015 for Birmingham Trees for Life were intended to support activities in multiple years. There had been considerable one-off costs in re-designing the website and in the +PLUS consultation process.

The Hon Treasurer proposed a motion to adopt the annual accounts, which was seconded by Sean Elson and carried unanimously.

6 Election of trustees

Three retiring trustees – Dr Jagjit Singh Taunque, Cllr Ray Hassall and Peter Miles – were retiring at the end of the maximum three terms of office under the current constitution. Kirsty Davies-Chinnock was retiring and not standing for re-election. They had all pledged to continue supporting the Society and its Committees, and those present were presented with gifts of thanks. Darren Kenny had stood down during the year as he was unable to devote the time required.

One trustee, being eligible, had offered himself for re-election:

Nick Venning, proposed by Geoff Cole and seconded by Christine Cushing.

There were thus four vacancies for trustees, and four candidates had offered themselves for election:

Izzes Gayle, proposed by the Chair and seconded by Sean Elson;

Amelia Ladbrook, proposed by Lorraine Francis and seconded by Nick Venning;

Anita Pickerden, proposed by Christine Cushing and seconded by Rita McLean; and

Haroon Qayum, proposed by Tony Elvin and seconded by the Honorary Treasurer.

Motions to elect all five were carried unanimously. They were welcomed to the board.

7 +PLUS Strategy

The Chair presented the +PLUS strategy, covering the period 2016-2020. A booklet had been published and was available for collection at the end of the AGM.

It set out the background. Our **Purpose** is “working together to make Birmingham a better place for everyone.” Our **Values** “are important as they underpin and guide all that we do as a Society. They help us meet our purpose” – offering *Inspiration*, *Influence* and *Inclusiveness*. Our **Identity** and “how the Society is seen and understood by the city’s decision makers and people is important” – summarised as *Relevant*, *Respected* and *Reliable*.

The +PLUS strategy has three objectives:

Clearer Identity

- Develop a clear purpose, set of values and identity;
- Develop and implement a brand strategy;
- Develop and implement a communications strategy;
- Embrace new and developing ways to engage audiences; and
- Strengthen existing core events whilst providing new inspiring activities.

Greater Influence

- Identify key issues within Birmingham to generate debate;
- Respond to key issues within the city, suburbs and broader region;
- Identify and develop partnerships with key stakeholders;
- Ensure all programmes and activities have an influential outcome; and
- Develop and implement Committee Action Plans.

Stronger Society

- Attract a younger and more inclusive audience;
- Grow our corporate and individual membership base;
- Implement an enhanced membership strategy;
- Build resilient finances; and
- Improve governance.

8 Any other business

David Treadwell urged the Trustees not to ignore the outlying areas in favour of the city centre. He also mentioned the view he'd heard that people moving to Birmingham from far and wide felt the city was an excellent place in which to settle. The Chair confirmed that the +PLUS strategy was concerned with the entire city, and indeed the part it played in the Midlands region known as Greater Birmingham.

Geoff Cole thanked Cllr Ray Hassall for his dream in establishing Birmingham Trees for Life. It was not just about the much-needed planting of trees but also community involvement, which had included thousands of schoolchildren in its first ten years.

Nick Venning thanked the Chair for his energy, enthusiasm and vision, commenting on his highly inclusive leadership style which was appealing to younger members.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 7:30pm.

Trustees and Members present who signed the attendance sheet:

Robin Barnes	Cllr Ray Hassall
Mike Baxter	Jonathan Hipkiss
Gianna Baxter	Jamie Justham
Trevor Beckett	Amelia Ladbrook
Martin Burton	Mary Martin
Geoff Cole	Rita McLean
Anthony Collins	Andrew Mitchell
Christine Cushing	Gavin Orton
Timothy Cuthbertson	John Phillips
Kay Dashti	Glyn Pitchford
Phyllis Eaton	Haroon Qayum
Sean Elson	Ajit Rai
Tony Elvin	Dr Jagjit Singh Taunque MBE DL
Lorraine Francis	David Treadwell
John Gale	Veronica Treadwell
Richard Garside	Dr Nick Venning
Izzes Gayle	Hon Alderman Jim Whorwood
Peter Gregory	

Guests present who signed the attendance sheet:

Jo Dunlop	Jane Harding
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