**The Coventry Society.**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at St. John the Baptist Church Hall, Fleet St. Coventry on Thursday 11th April 2024.**

1. **Attendance.** 26 members, including 8 Committee members plus 4 visitors and a guest speaker.

Apologies: T. Claye, T. Cornfoot, S. James, P. Lockyer, J. Purcell, J. Payne.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Taiwo Owatemi M.P. for Coventry North West.

1. **Minutes of the A.G.M.held on 17th April 2023.**
2. Accuracy. The minutes were accepted as a true record.
3. Matters arising.

* The Chairman commented on the Giga Factory at Baginton which had now been renamed and there was optimism that the project would go ahead.
* There were no further matters arising.

1. **Chairman’s Report.**

This had been published on-line prior to the meeting and copies were distributed amongst members at the A.G.M. Once again he thanked J. Payne and P. Maddocks for the compilation and design of the Report. He did not propose to go through it comprehensively but point to items of interest and importance that the Society had addressed during the year.

* Campaigning with particular regard to City Centre South, meeting the developers and pushing for the preservation of public art works which looked very promising as the developers were receptive to this. He paid tribute to Committee Member A. Law who had been particularly involved and active in this aspect. He also welcomed John Prevc, a prominent local architect, to the Committee. His expertise had been very valuable with regard to the development.

Coundon Wedge: the Society was concerned about plans that encroached on the Wedge as part of the green belt. The signs for this campaign were not so encouraging.

River Sherbourne: the Society was involved with the project to clean up the river, taking part in the Sherbourne River Festival as its Civic Day project.

* Consultations: the Society had commented on the council’s proposed policies and taken part in its public consultations, e.g. Design Guide for Householders, the proposed Light Railway , the Coventry Local Plan etc. The Society also responded to the Government’s consultation on the National Policy Framework.
* Blue Plaques: although the Society had not sponsored any Blue Plaques this year, it was proposed that such a tribute should be paid to renowned cyclist Eileen Sheridan possibly at the Coventry Rugby Ground. Discussions were ongoing. The Society was keen to make cycling a theme for this year. The Society would also be interested in buildings under threat. A plaque might help to give them extra protection.
* Coventry Heritage Network: the idea was to bring together various organisations and to be an outlet to advertise their activities.
* Planning Applications: the Society does not comment on all applications, concentrating on bigger development plans such as Abbott’s Lane, Coundon Wedge, City Centre South etc.
* Partnerships: there had been consultations with senior officers at the council and Coventry University. It was important that the Society engaged with players of interest in the city.
* The Society continues to maintain a full programme of monthly meetings including visits to places of interest in the summer.
* The Chairman also commented on other aspect such as membership of Civic Voice, working with the Green New Deal, holding its annual Heritage Conference, supporting Heritage Open Days [last year combining with 8/9 other groups at the Drapers’ Hall, welcoming over 400 visitors] and maintaining communications with members through its website and social media outlets.

1. **Treasurer’s report.**

The Treasurer presented the accounts for both 2022/23 and 2023/24. He reported that the major part of the Society’s income came from subscriptions and the monthly raffle.

1. Audited accounts for financial year February 2022 to January 2023.

Expenditure: £2,119.56; Income plus balance in Bank current account: £2,030.90. Treasurer’s float: £70. Coventry Building Society account: £700.74. PayPal account: £1091.64. Total assets: **£3,893.28** Change in assets 2022/23: **+ £49.47.** The accounts had been audited and found to be accurate.

1. Audited accounts for financial year February 2023 to January 2024.

Expenditure: £2851.22. Income plus balance in Bank current account: £1962.51. Treasurer’s float: £40. Coventry Building Society account: £1458.00.

PayPal account: £672.52.

Total assets: **£4,132.11** Change in assets Jan. 2023/24: **+ £239.83** The accounts had been audited and found to be accurate.

Members endorsed the accounts for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

1. **Appointment of Auditor for 2024 to 2025.**

Mr. M. Newton had agreed to audit the accounts for the previous 2 years and was willing to do so for 2025/2025. The membership endorsed his appointment.

1. **Election of Officers.**
2. Secretary. J. Payne: nominated by T. Cornfoot and seconded by P. Walters. Agreed.
3. Treasurer. J. Passmore: nominated by P. Walters and seconded by P. Maddocks. Agreed.
4. **Election pf other Trustees [Executive Committee].**

Nominee. Nominated by: Seconded by:

D. Porter. D. Fry. P. Walters.

J. Prevc. T. Cornfoot. T. Brown.

T. Brown. D. Fry. J. Goodman.

D. Fry. A. Law. P. Maddocks.

J. Goodman. T. Brown. P. Maddocks.

A. Law. T. Cornfoot. D. Fry.

P. Maddocks. J. Payne. P. Walters.

All the nominees were elected unanimously.

1. **Any further nominations for the Executive Committee.**

There were no further nominations.

1. **Any other business.**

The Chairman introduced Helene Barrett, daughter of Charles Barrett, formally Chief Executive of Coventry City Council. She is transcribing his diaries and intends to donate them to the City Archives.

The Chairman announced to members that this was his last appearance as Chair of the Society and T. Cornfoot would now assume the position. He announced that the next AGM would take place on Wednesday April 9th 2025. As there was no further business, the Chairman thanked members for their attendance and looked forward to welcoming them to future meetings.

He then introduced Taiwo Owatemi M.P. for Coventry North West Constituency to speak to members.

Taiwo Owatemi has represented Coventry N.W. since 2019. Some of her concerns are conservation, Coventry’s excessive housing targets and as a former NHS Cancer Pharmacist, Health and Social Care.

In her address she initially outlined her career so far. She then talked about the history of the city and the threats to its heritage, expanded her views on large scale developments [for example the Coundon Wedge] and the lack of amenities to be provided such as bus services, education and health care centres. She wanted to engage actively with developers and planners as she felt that current policies favoured the developers and Coventry City Council seemed reluctant to press them to provide the money or the facilities needed. She believed that when developers wanted to build new estates, the relevant council should insist that the infrastructure was put in place first.

There followed a wide range of questions mainly concerning views on Green Belt development, space for industrial use, education [including plans to re-introduce a ‘Sure Start’ scheme], social care for older people, pension provision and age related retirements and heritage matters, for example to re-purpose and re-use existing buildings.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm.