

**The City of Durham Trust**  
**(Registered charity number 502132)**

**MINUTES** of the 79th Annual General Meeting of The Trust Held at 7pm in The Assembly Rooms,  
North Bailey and Online on Wednesday 27 October 2021

**1 WELCOME, PRESENTATION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

The Chair (John Lowe) welcomed attendees (in person and via Zoom) to the Trust's 2021 AGM in the beautiful setting of the Assembly Rooms Theatre and quipped that there would be three 'acts' this evening: presentation of the Trust's Architectural Award (2019), the formal AGM business, then an illustrated talk by Dr Douglas Pocock.

For the first act, he was delighted to hand the 2019 award commemorative plaque to Kate Barton, Theatre Manager of the Assembly Rooms. The historic theatre cost £2.5M to renovate and Trustees were impressed by the sensitive preservation of notable features alongside modern functionality (copies of the Trust's Bulletin No. 88 detailing the project were available for members at the AGM). Kate gave thanks on behalf of the University for the award and for holding the AGM here. She agreed it is a very special building and said it was an honour to have been involved in its refurbishment. She gave a fascinating run-through of the building's history from the 1600s to the present day, including interesting discoveries such as: a medieval defensive wall uncovered in the foundations and the original rigging system and trapdoor that are still used. The Chair thanked her for her enthusiastic commentary.

Starting the formal business of the AGM, apologies were received from Roger Cornwell, Sue Shaw, and Fenwick and Joan Lawson. The Lawsons had sent their thanks for the Honorary Membership status bestowed on them, which they were thrilled to accept.

**2 MINUTES OF THE 78th AGM (30 September 2020).**

The Minutes, already approved by Trustees, were noted.

**3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

There were no matters arising.

**4 REPORT OF TRUSTEES AND PRESENTATION OF THE TRUST'S ACCOUNTS (period ended 7 April 2021):** presented by the Honorary Treasurer Malcolm Reed.

Malcolm highlighted items from his Treasurer's Report in the Annual Review (pages 13 & 14). For this unusual year, with the pandemic and the Trust's change to CIO status, it made sense to extend the accounting period to 7 April 2021 (from 31 December 2020), to avoid the need for a second set of accounts up to the Company's official closure. Hence, the 15 months covered by the accounts are not directly comparable with preceding/succeeding years due to the higher subscription income balanced against lower operating costs and loss of retail sales. The Trust's finances are healthy with a sufficient buffer. There were no questions. The 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, already approved by Trustees, were accepted as a true record at the AGM.

## **5 AMENDMENTS TO SUBSCRIPTION RATES.**

This resolution was shared with Members on 11 October 2021 and listed in the Annual Review (page 11). Malcolm explained the reasoning behind the proposal to level up the subscription rates to make membership more accessible, and he ran through points A to D of the formal resolution. The Chair thanked Malcolm for his work on the accounts and the resolution. There were no questions, so the Chair moved to a vote. There were no votes against, so the resolution was overwhelmingly carried.

## **6 APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES.**

Four Trustees who are retiring and willing to continue, Liz Brown, Richard Hird, Matthew Phillips and Prof. Barbara Ravelhofer, were proposed and re-elected by consensus. The Chair thanked them for their continued service. A Trustee co-opted during the year, Francis Pritchard, was proposed and confirmed by consensus. The Chair thanked Francis for his valuable work on membership and meetings.

## **7 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY OFFICERS OF THE TRUST.**

Proposed by the Chair, and carried by acclaim, the following were elected: Francis Pritchard as Hon. Secretary, and Dr Malcolm Reed as Hon. Treasurer. The Chair congratulated them both. As a CIO, the requirement for vetting of our accounts is now simpler, so the proposal is for Members at the AGM to remit the appointment of Examiner to Trustees, who will reconsider the terms of appointment to match the Charity Commission guidance for CIOs. The proposal was agreed by AGM attendees.

## **8 HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT.**

Membership, Francis reported that the Trust currently has just under 400 members (387) consisting of: Honorary: 8; Joint: 44; Joint Senior: 142; Life: 47; Ordinary: 30; Senior: 115; State benefit: 1.

## **9 CHAIR'S REMARKS.**

The Annual Review 2020-2021 describes key aspects of this unique and decisive year for our city. This is our first AGM as a CIO and Trustees re-started in-person meetings in September. It is gratifying that the Neighbourhood Plan has proved influential in planning decisions/appeals, but the County Plan is proving less effective judging by the recent Bent House Lane application decision. Trustees intend to raise the issue of CDP Policy 5 conditions being ignored with DCC's new Cabinet members. The decision to de-register The Sands common land is disappointing but the Trust and the Parish Council were ably represented at the public inquiry by Michael Hurlow and Roger Cornwell. We await to see what DCC's new administration plans for the land. Reports concerning the DLI museum, Dunelm House, Redhills and Crook Hall are also in the Annual Review, with welcome recent news that Crook Hall is being sold to the National Trust. 2020-21 saw the launch of the Trust's new website and Matthew Phillips has written excellent blogs on sustainable transport. We have a talented and committed team of Trustees - more details can be read on page 10 of the Annual Review. Do get in touch with ideas to commemorate our 80th anniversary (October 2022) and we all need to try to recruit new members.

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

No other business. The Chair thanked all attendees and drew the formal business to a close at 19.50.

As a 'grande finale' to the evening, the Chair invited Dr Douglas Pocock to present his illustrated talk: "A City in trust: Eight decades of caring for Durham", which sets the scene for the Trust's 80th anniversary next year. The fascinating talk was very warmly received by all attendees. Dr Adrian Green thanked Douglas for his tremendous summary of the Trust's work over the last eight decades and noted the recurring battle themes. He highlighted how important Douglas's grasp of detail and judgement of what is significant has been to the Trust's work and thanked him on behalf of Trustees and Members. The event concluded at 21.00.

## **The Trustees**