

Northiam Conservation Society  
Minutes of Northiam Conservation Society's 32nd AGM  
7.30 pm, Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, by Zoom  
*(To be verified at the Society's 33rd AGM, 2022)*

Sarah Giles, Chairman, thanked **all Members present** for attending electronically.

**Formal Business of the Meeting**

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Committee: Jeff Colton and Alex Kennedy

**2. Minutes of the 31st AGM, held on Friday, 10th May 2019**

The minutes were circulated by email.

**3. Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved, Proposed by Linda Windebank and Seconded by **Carol** Ward.

**4. Adoption of 2018-2019 Annual Report**

Gillian Neville proposed the adoption of the Report, seconded by Ann Driver

**5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report was circulated in advance of the meeting. Treasurer Gillian Neville reported that the Society has a credit balance of almost £18,000. Adoption of the Annual Accounts was proposed by Gillian Neville and seconded by Sarah Giles

Mrs B A Antrobus had audited the accounts.

**6. Chairman's Report and Comments**

The Chairman's Report was circulated in advance of the meeting. Sarah Giles reviewed the activities of the Society over the past twenty four months, referring to the disruption to normal society activities caused by the Covid pandemic and related restrictions, and highlighting in particular the fund raising event of the Grease Singalong, and the support provided by the Society in funding a biodiversity survey of the village and its immediate surroundings. This will result in a leaflet produced in conjunction with the Northiam Horticultural Society to help individual gardeners who wish to encourage wildlife and biodiversity in their own gardens.

The major achievement over the past two years has been the establishment of the orchard at St Francis Fields, including the planting of native hedging, acquisition of locally made chestnut timber gates and also the wild flower plantings. The Society is very grateful to the generous donations from two members of the village towards the cost of the trees and gates.

She previewed the planned fundraising Singalong in 2022 which will be '**Mamma Mia 2**'

**7. Election of New Honorary President**

Sarah Giles paid tribute to Peter Hayman who died earlier this year. Julian Lockett was proposed by Sarah Giles as the new Honorary President and this was seconded by Carol Ward. The committee is delighted that he has agreed to assume this role.

**8. Election of Senior Officers**

Janet Burns came forward as Membership Secretary and was proposed by Janette King, seconded by Sylvia Wickens.

In addition, Andrew Hawkins volunteered to join the committee and was gratefully accepted: He was proposed by John Windebank, and seconded by Ann Driver

## 9. Any Other Businesses

- Janette King introduced the proposal that the Society's Constitution, which was originally adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1989, should be updated. While the focus remains as stated in the Constitution, some of the original statements were imprecise and others are no longer relevant, and priorities have altered. Therefore it is believed that now it is appropriate to amend the constitution to reflect the digital age of communications and social media, the increase in traffic through the village, and a greater focus on the green environment to encompass use of open spaces, preservation and encouragement of wildlife, trees and hedges, and the preservation of the Dark Skies above the village as well as its historic buildings and streetscape. This suggestion was approved and the next step is for Janette King to submit an amended version to all present for their approval by the end of July by email. With **two-thirds** approval from those present **at the AGM** the amendments can then be submitted to the Charities Commission.
- Platinum Jubilee Tree Planting suggestion by Ann Driver. It was proposed that a Jubilee Nuttree of **hazel, almond and cobnut** trees should be planted next year on the triangle of the orchard field above the wildflower strips overlooking the orchard. This was agreed.
- Deborah Moon asked for additional information on the wildflower experiment strips. Sarah Giles responded that feedback from the Open Day was positive though results will only be properly visible after a period of two years. A big difference is expected by summer 2022 especially the strip with plug plants although to ensure widespread understanding of its purpose she emphasised the experimental nature of the project and said that clearly not all strips will succeed. Hay from Great Dixter will be spread on **one of the experimental strips** in September to boost the seed bank.
- Carol Ward suggested involving the primary school and SG will take this idea up with the Head teacher.
- Linda Windebank asked whether open days would be held. Sarah Giles explained that **at key times of year the orchard will be open to villagers, and that the new public footpath will pass the orchard. A new explanation board will give information about the orchard and the wildflower experimental strips.**
- Deborah Moon proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee for all the work carried out across the village and orchard. Sarah Giles responded with thanks for this.
- Ann Driver proposed a vote of thanks to Sarah Giles and Janette King for their work in planting the plugs and maintaining the strips until they were established. This was much appreciated.

There was no further business and the meeting concluded, with hopes that in 2022 the next AGM will be in person, **at 20.00**.