

**THE SANDGATE SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES
of the meeting held on
Wednesday 4th March 2020
Chichester Memorial Hall, Sandgate High Street
At 19:30**

INTRODUCTION

Chair, Sal Kenward – Good evening and welcome to you all, and in particular to our President Euan Williamson, and our Vice-President Marjorie Finlay-Stone.

Thank you very much for your wine donation Euan – very much appreciated.

I hope you have also enjoyed the canapes which, unlike last year, we managed not to burn.

001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Vicki Fisher Sally Starbuck Ann Saxby Mr and Mrs Durrani Peter Godden John Andrews Ken and Rosemary England	Richard Showler Jo Ames and Jerry Ridgway Jeffery Finlay-Stone Peter and Annie Bamford Carole Williamson Diane Potter
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002 MINUTES OF THE AGM held on 6th MARCH 2019

Proposed: Sally Milton

Seconded: Euan Williamson

The Minutes were **agreed by the members present as a true record of the 2019 Annual General Meeting.**

003 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising

I must begin with saying how sad we were to lose five of our long-standing members this year.

John Cutmore – a former committee member

Ken Molloy

John Smith

Pat Gurney, whose husband David is very supportive of our Archives team

Bernard Sargeant – who lived in Australia but remained a member and contributed to archives in the past.

They will all be missed.

Each of our Committee members will talk about their different responsibilities in detail and I would like to thank them all for their time, input and hard work throughout the year to ensure our Society flourishes.

And thank you, the Members, for your support in general and at Events in particular.

I would like to remind existing members and maybe inform new members of the role of our Society – to preserve and enhance the heritage of our wonderful village of Sandgate: everything we do is to fulfil this obligation in our Constitution.

Some projects we have successfully completed this year include:

1. **CCTV** – In addition to getting a £2200 grant from the District Council for implementation of CCTV which went to the Parish council for the project, the Sandgate Society also gave £500 to cover the shortfall. Work will start shortly on this very important safety feature, which includes the ever-vandalised Sandgate Park.
2. **The Handrails at the Undercliff.** If you have walked up there, you will have noticed that for some years now there have been gaps in the railings – exceedingly dangerous for us all let alone those less-sighted or able. I am pleased to confirm the KCC bowed to our pressure and they have now been replaced, making the walk much less hazardous. We will ensure these are maintained.
3. **High Street Regeneration.** Around 5 years ago, Marjorie Finlay-Stone's brother visited Sandgate and despite loving the seafront, was vocal about the street scene in the middle of the village. Marjorie then spearheaded the High Street regeneration scheme to screen not only the

car park but also the bins outside Riviera Court, which the world and his wife seemed to think were municipal bins for the village. The project was ambitious with a price tag of over £70k and, unsurprisingly, we were unable to get it off the ground. However at the end of last year a bid was made for a grant from the District Council High Street Regeneration Scheme for a reduced amount and I am delighted to say this has been granted so a beginning can be made this year, This will incorporate planting, lighting, CCTV and screening the bins from the High Street. We are very excited to have been able to finally implement this very important enhancement of our village, and I hope you will agree as the project progresses.

4. **Happy To Chat Bench.** One of our Committee, Adrian Watts, who is also on the Parish Council has acted on our decision to provide a Happy To Chat bench. He has secured prime position next to the Boathouse on Granville Parade. Isolation and loneliness are current problems, and Liz Smith of our Events Team has ideas for 2020 to help solitary residents of Sandgate. In the meantime, the Happy to Chat bench does what it says on the tin....if you sit down, be happy to chat.

5. **Summer and Christmas Parties**

These are traditionally under the lead of the Chair with massive back up from the Events Team and Committee. This year the parties were also co-hosted by Andrew Lawley who kept us to budget and inspired the creativity of the décor. I think everyone who went to the Xmas party will agree there was a large Wow factor as we walked in.

The weather again let us down for our Summer Party, but a very good time was again had by all. It was a full house and we are very grateful to Saga for allowing us to host our Parties in their Pavilion. We are hoping it is third time lucky this year and we can be back outside, with a change of band and sunshine.

As we sold 130 tickets for the Xmas party in 2 hours, we knew that moving the venue to Saga was the right choice. Not only could we offer disabled access, but more members were able to come. As this was the first year at Saga we weren't sure how it would go, but we now know that nobody wanted to go home, so this year there will be more dancing (and singing) for those who want to stay on.

6. Finally – a bit of fun. After an article in the Herald about the new Folkestone Monopoly board game, we made a bid to include as much of Sandgate as possible, including the Castle and iconic Coastguard cottages. The main building proposed was, of course, the Old Fire Station. Well we failed on the Castle and Cottages – but am highly delighted to confirm that the Old Fire Station is included, and on the space previously held by Pentonville Road! The game is being launched on 23rd March, so I hope you all buy the game for next Christmas and support our entry!

Vice-President, Marjorie Finlay-Stone - Footprints Project.

Archive costs remain constant.

Web site costs have increased due to costs for improving the Web site by Red Dragon.

We have spent more on Events to ensure a better quality of event is offered.

Projects

1. We donate £350 each year to the library to the reading & early learning classes during the summer holidays, run mostly by Gaye our Parish clerk & Liz Smith who is on our committee. They had over 100 attendees last year.
2. A TV has been provided to the library together with memory sticks of local archive photographs. We are told these are very popular with adults and children alike.
3. The planters which screen the Riviera Court bins are supplied & maintained by the Society. The planters have proved to be a popular initiative.
4. St Pauls Church garden - twice a year we pay for Hythe Garden services to tidy the gardens / grounds, albeit not in the past 6 months due to the scaffolding that has been in place.
5. We have given a £200 donation to the Boules group who once a year play our twin village in France., our donation together with a similar amount from the Parish council assists with hosting costs.
6. Two donations, totalling up to £400 have been made to the Community garden project led by Leonie Wootton, who is with us tonight, again this has proved to be a very popular initiative.
7. We have also been involved with the CCTV cameras, which are proposed for installation in the village, and we have received a donation/grant for this project.

To summarise; we have had a very busy year, made a lot of funding donations and our operating figures have ended up very well. We currently hold funds of approx. £16,000.

006 MEMBERSHIP REPORT by Sal Kenward

Toni Miles is unfortunately unable to be with us this evening and we send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery from her recent operation.

We are very encouraged by the rising number of new members, 6 of which came from the Xmas party.

Our Celebrity event has to be the entertaining and absorbing talk by Troy Scott Smith, Head Gardener at Sissinghurst Castle Gardens - 92 attended this one.

SEA FESTIVAL – TOMBOLA AND POP UP VINTAGE TEA ROOM

The annual Big Fat Quiz was popular and both our fab Summer and Christmas parties were indeed fabulous. Sell outs at 100+ for each one. As already covered by Sal Kenward – our very efficient and engaging Chair.

The Archive Team's Picture Show very well attended and an opportunity to show rarely seen pictures of times and places gone by.

A Couple of Firsts for us in 2019

Sloe Gin Competition – first ever and suggested by Members Geoff and Hilary Cane. We want to make this an annual event and have actually just had the second one. It's a lot of fun and judging is by People Choice Vote.

A Volunteers Tea – our chance of saying thank you to our fantastic volunteers for serving the tea and coffee at The Old Fire Station on Saturday Mornings. Again, having our second one this Saturday.

Total Numbers attending Events for 2019 was over 900.

We continue to attract a lot of bookings and enquiries from social media sites, (thanks to Bob Preedy for managing our Facebook page) and our contact groups – eg Friends of Folkestone Museum and Folkestone Arts Society, thanks to our collaboration with The Sandgate Heritage Trust.

A total of £1767.84 (Excluding parties £1309.16) was raised from our events.

An enormous thank you to the Event Team for their hard work and support – Hazel Barrett, Sal Kenward, Vicki Fisher and Liz Smith. Plus of course our Committee Member colleagues.

We could not begin to have such an ambitious programme without the help and support of these fab people along with husbands, wives, partners, grandkids and very long-suffering friends! So a huge thank-you from the Events Team and roll on 2020!

I would like to point out that the Society uses both the Sandgate Design Statement and the Sandgate conservation area appraisal in our decision making for planning applications. Both these documents can be found online and hard copies at the Sandgate library.

Also the comments made by the Sandgate Parish Council planning committee are taken into account for decision making.

Two projects:

First the (proposed) Sandy Lane heritage trail.

The Backdoor Training Area, now owned by Taylor Wimpey is land south of the Shorncliffe military cemetery.

Annie Bamford from the Society archives said she was concerned that the public would be denied access to this area. She (Annie) took us for a walk, myself and Marjorie, our Vice-President. along a path that has been used by the public for years. The walk took us near Martello Tower 9, a gun placement, the Napoleonic wall, a wonderful view of Hythe Canal, the Military Cemetery and the Redoubt.

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership's Dragonfly Way is also included in part of the walk.

Marjorie contacted them, we met and discussed the proposal of a Heritage Trail.

The White Cliffs Partnership are currently in negotiations with Taylor Wimpey as I believe this area will be open for public use.

From their website:

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership was established in 1989 to help landowners care for the special coast and countryside of Dover, Folkestone and Hythe districts. etc, so they were always aware of the site and its potential. (Samphire Hoe).

The second project is to find and photograph all the MOD boundary marker stones in Sandgate parish. This was, I think, started by our President Euan who has produced some excellent photos for us.

Annie has a very interesting map showing all the boundary markers, this of course makes them easier to find. We have currently found 17, there are 54 (I think) in all. We would like these markers protected in some way.

This project, when finished, will be put online with the other archive photos. Annie will also have hard copies at the OFS.

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ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2020-2021

There was one resignation this year:

Maggie Brinsden. Maggie has been a member of the Committee for 8 years acting as Secretary, Events Co-ordinator and then Events Leader. Her highlights, which some of you may have shared, have been the 50 Years in Pictures by Reg Turnill, The Chocolate Night, the Murder Mystery and the Romney Marsh church trip last year. We are pleased that Maggie is joining Jill on the Archives Team so we don't lose regular touch with her. Thank you again Maggie for your hard work not only this year but the last 8 years.

We are very pleased that Liz Smith is taking over as our new Events Leader. Liz is tireless in her contribution to village life generally and we are very lucky she has agreed to take over the mantle from Maggie. Good luck Liz.

We would like to welcome Gemma Adams, who has been assisting the Events Team and is now formally joining us. She is already proving very popular with her offer to cook scones for our Volunteers' Tea this coming Saturday and was Chief Canape Supplier for tonight.

011 QUESTIONS TO PARISH COUNCILLORS

Stuart raised the issue of the substantially increased parking costs in the Country Park which he felt penalized local people wanting to go to the park and would also put off visitors coming to Sandgate. Adrian Watts responded that this is a Folkestone & Hythe District Council matter, but that the understanding was that the council's intention was to encourage more people to access the park via Folkestone rather than the Radnor Cliff route.

012 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Our President Euan Williamson, gave thanks to Sal and the committee for a very successful and entertaining year, this was seconded by our vice-president Marjorie Finlay-Stone.

The attendees were then invited to review the presentation and map displayed in the hall showing the MOD boundary stone locations around the village.

Date of next AGM: Wednesday 3rd March 2021