

THE KNOWLE SOCIETY

(A company limited by guarantee)

Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting of The Society in its 62nd year Saturday 22nd February 2025 in Knowle Village Hall

| Trustee Directors Present | Apologies |
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| David Bower, Chairman | Alistair Innes |
| David Fraley, Deputy Chairman | Martin Fortune |
| David Watson, Treasurer | |
| Maria Brown, Secretary | Martin Warr |
| Gavin Allan | |
| Lilla Baker | |
| Angela Bird | |
| Leighton Jones | |
| Andrew Marston | |
| David Pinwell | Robert Hopkins, Keith & Shirley Barrett, Linda Parsons, Paul Sibelle, Kevin Rowe |
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| Members Present: 75 | |

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| 1 | Welcome and Apologies for absence: David Bower as Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, thanked everyone for their attendance and took the above apologies. |
| 2 | Minutes of the AGM held 24th February 2024 were approved, proposed by Andrew Marston, seconded by Anne Smith. All in favour. |
| 3 | <p>Chairman’s Report</p> <p>David Bower referred to the Trustees’ Report which detailed the many and varied activities of the Society, thanking members and volunteers, many of whom were present, for their valued support. He depicted the job of “taming the elephants” of KN01 and KN02 which had been made harder by the rejection of the Solihull Local Plan and the government-led accelerated housing initiative which the Society would continue to engage with and work to influence as much as possible so that the eventual outcome would be more optimal. However, he warned that the situation was sub-optimal at present.</p> <p>In ensuring that the Society met its aims and legal obligations of public benefit, with earlier initiatives in the Local Nature Reserve, the development of the Library, bulb planting and today’s very active Local History Centre, he was pleased to report that 14 years of volunteer support had resulted in keeping the Library open on Saturday afternoons.</p> <p>Two major projects had been developed in association with “Love Knowle Park” – a very successful playground development and, more recently, a half basketball court. He felt it important to acknowledge that this has been funded by £15K from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and £15K from the Society, courtesy of the Mary Riley legacy, with the Local Authority having responsibility for seeing it through. He was pleased to read out a very appreciate facebook message from a parent who had observed how much it meant to her to see her young son supported by a group of older youths to enjoy the court, displaying kindness and sportsmanship, which she felt exemplified great hope for the future.</p> <p>It was observed that the Society did have to turn down requests sometimes, referencing good governance. He was grateful for the experience and expertise of his fellow trustees in updating and developing various policies and procedures, setting a strategy for the years ahead and being responsive to safeguarding and data protection obligations – “Martin’s law” being a case in point</p> |

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| | <p>which impacted public benefit and posed an existential threat to such events but the Society hoped to be able to manage to the best of its ability.</p> <p>In response to a recent appeal, volunteers had come forward and it seemed that the way ahead would be fruitful as the retention and development of volunteers to keep the Society as a “going concern” with its substantial membership and sound financial foundation.</p> <p>He thanked all for attending and for what they each contributed.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Treasurer’s Report</p> <p>David Watson introduced his report accounting for the year October 2023 to September 2024. Printed copies of the full accounts were available and e.copies via the website.</p> <p>Income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropped a little this year - due in the main to the lack of large donations or legacies as opposed to the previous year • Membership remained good • £10K, with its associated gift aid, made up with bank savings • Of £9650, £650 had been received via the Direct Debit scheme, with new members signing up this way <p>Expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a high spending year, with very little in projects outside of normal spending, resulting in a drop from £12,800 to £11,700, along with an increase in reserves of £2,803 • General Fund: no calendars or expenditure on Knot Garden this year, with some expenditure on new equipment. The Planning expenditure figure demonstrated a catch up for three years of printing costs. • Donations to other associations: little change apart from a one-off cost for road signage to support a Visit Knowle event. <p>Balance Sheet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank – £112,060 equity – comprising the nominal fund, the general fund and the legacy fund. <p>Future spending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table of projects shared, showing £112K Reserves, with anticipated spend, bringing the figure down to £17.5K • Examples of proposed investment shown: Basketball court; LHC archive/digitising project; Natural Environment initiatives; data protection (review of cyber security risks pertaining to main database of membership information); Heritage Trail information initiative of QR codes to extract digital information and learn more about the area; communication and engagement – looking at improving communication in social media and advertising. <p>In conclusion, David Watson described the various means of donating to the Society and would always be pleased to receive such.</p> <p>There were no direct questions apart from an observation from Peter Johnson who was pleased to note the stabilisation of the recent decline in membership over the past ten years and hoped that this would be an ongoing trend.</p> <p>The adoption of the Treasurer’s Report and Accounts was therefore proposed by Peter Johnson, seconded by Lilla Baker, and carried unanimously. A vote of thanks was duly recorded to David Watson, Treasurer.</p> |

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| 5 | <p>Appointment of Independent Examiner The appointment of West - Chartered Accountants as the Independent Examiner for The Society was proposed by the Treasurer, seconded by Bill Bohanna, and agreed unanimously.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Elections Peter Ewin as President of The Society took the Chair for this item and the following Officers and Trustee Directors were duly elected unanimously:</p> <p>Election of Officers</p> <p>Chairman: David Bower, nominated by David Fraley, seconded by William Bohanna Deputy Chairman: Gavin Allan, nominated by Andrew Marston, seconded by Elizabeth Baker Treasurer: David Watson, nominated by William Bohanna, seconded by David Fraley Secretary: Maria Brown, nominated by David Fraley, seconded by Elizabeth Baker</p> <p>Election of Trustee Directors:</p> <p>David Pinwell: nominated by Angela Bird, seconded by David Watson Alistair Innes: nominated by William Bohanna, seconded by Elizabeth Baker Andrew Marston: nominated by David Watson, seconded by David Fraley David Fraley: nominated by William Bohanna, seconded by David Watson Martin Fortune: nominated by David Fraley, seconded by David Watson</p> <p>David Bower thanked Dave Fraley for his support as Deputy Chair over his term of office and welcomed Martin Fortune as a newly elected Trustee at this time.</p> <p>Bill Bohanna then paid tribute to Martin Warr as he was standing down as a Trustee Director. In his time with the Society, Martin had signed up at least 1000 members as well as his unstinting work to support the Society in other ways, including collections of donations for various events such as the Christmas Lights in the past. The Society was indebted to him and he looked forward to many visitors.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Presentations David Bower was pleased to present both Peter and Betty Ewin with Life Membership of the Society as they were stepping down from joint chairmanship of the Local History Centre and deserved such recognition.</p> <p>In his absence, Robert Hopkins, who had been a stalwart volunteer of the Library for nearly 14 years, was also honoured with the award of Life Membership of the Society.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Any Other Business There was no other business.</p> |
| | <p>That concluded the formal business of the AGM at 3.13 p.m.</p> |
| | <p>REFRESHMENT INTERVAL – during which tea and cakes were served and for which a vote of thanks was proposed and fully endorsed by the meeting.</p> |
| | <p>Following the refreshment break, members of the KDBH Forum outlined their approaches to planning in the area, updating on the Arden Triangle and Hampton Road sites.</p> <p>This was much appreciated by the audience who recorded their thanks in a round of applause.</p> |

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| | Gavin Allan, as incoming Deputy Chairman, gave the vote of thanks. |
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| | Chairman, David Bower, thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 4.30 p.m. |
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