



FOUNDED 1877

THE UNITED WARDS CLUB OF THE CITY OF LONDON

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held at The Guildhall

on Friday 22nd March 2024 at 6:00 pm

Present:

Officers

Mr Mike Wren
Mr Dhruv Patel
Mr Chris Edge

President
Senior Vice President
Honorary Treasurer

Past Presidents

Mrs Patricia Campfield MBE
Major Geoffrey Berry TD
Mr Clifford Rust
Mrs Ann Scrutton
Mr Barry Scrutton
Mrs Anita Rust

In attendance

Mrs Hazel Davis Minutes Secretary

A total of over 30 members

1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from 17 members: Mrs Mary Hardy, Mr Mark Hardy, Mr Brian Wadsworth, Mr Dicky Bird, Mr John Toth (Honorary Examiner), Mr Stephen Osborne, Mrs Valerie Hamilton, Ms Denice Fennell Pond, Ms Heike Sowa, Mr Geoffrey Edwards, Mr Garry Wykes, Mr John Hammond, Ms Jeanette Miller, Mr Brian Willett, Ms Beryl Snashall, Ms Joyce Lambert, Mr Laurence Target, Mrs Ann Ball.

2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2024

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 29th March 2023 had been circulated. It was agreed that they should be accepted and the President signed a copy as a true record.

3 Report and Accounts

The Honorary Treasurer presented the report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Our operating deficit has reduced from £11k to £2k which is in line with our 3-year strategy review. We are budgeting for a breakeven operating position this year.

After donations and investment changes the overall surplus for the year was £8K

The Finance and Investment committee decided to move all our investments into a single **Medium high capital growth fund** which, so far, appears to be holding its own.

Events remain a challenge to cover costs, but the Club Holiday yielded £1,100 to bring an overall surplus on event of £1.5k



Running the Club with voluntary officers has been a challenge, but key areas have worked well, including:

1. Hannan Ali, Assistant Secretary, who has kindly agreed to receive postal bookings and cheques, and bank cheques.
2. Hazel Davis who has graciously agreed to act as minute secretary for the Governing Body.
3. Veronica Hunt-Lewis and Dave Lewis becoming the merchandise officers.
4. We use a contact of Dhruv Patel's to produce the newsletter at a nominal cost
5. I volunteered to handle the 4 key events, but have ended up doing much more including managing the membership system which whilst working satisfactorily has had a few challenges. New members register themselves and pay by credit card without any intervention, but getting existing members to do this is difficult.
6. The GB has agreed to recruit Clerk, with a small honorarium, to take on some of the work especially around the membership system. We are delighted to welcome Stephen Henderson to this role.

I should also mention John Troth who continues to undertake the examination of our annual accounts.

I am personally very grateful to all the volunteers and for their help. Thank you.

The accounts have already been approved by the GB and commend them for your approval.

There were no questions on the report and accounts.

The report accounts had been approved by the Governing Body on 26th February 2024.

The adoption of the report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 was proposed by the Treasurer and seconded by Major Geoffrey Berry, and was approved by a show of hands.

4 Elections

President Mike Wren gave a short introduction and thanked all those who had supported him during his term in office and he was his delighted to introduce the election of officers.

- a The President announced that there was one nomination for President: Mr Dhruv Patel. The new President was declared elected by a show of hands and invested with the gown and chain of office by the outgoing President who offered his congratulations. The new President expressed his honour at being elected.
- b The new President announced that there was one nomination for Senior Vice President: Mr Chris Edge. He declared him elected by a show of hands and invested him with his badge of office. Mr Edge thanked members for electing him.
- c The Secretary announced that there was one nomination for Junior Vice President: Mrs Mary Hardy. The meeting was asked to consider Motion 1 details of which were circulated prior to the AGM.



Motion 1: This meeting agrees to waive the normal requirement for a Director to be a member for two years to stand.

Member Milan Sachania expressed his concern that these regulations were there for a reason and that to waive them needs to be an important matter of expediency. Whilst he understands that Mary Hardy is a very worthy candidate and he will approve her election he asks the Governing Body to look again at this rule before waiving it for more than this year. The President said this point was well made. The meeting showed the nomination was approved by a show of hands and Mary Hardy was duly elected.

- d The President announced that there was one nomination for Treasurer, Emmanuel Lamptey. He declared him elected by a show of hands and invested him with his badge of office. Thanks were offered to Emmanuel Lamptey for agreeing to undertake the post of Honorary Treasurer.
- e The President announced that there were three vacancies for elected members of the Governing Body. Nomination papers had been received from three candidates:

Commander James Nisbet VR RN
Mr Tim McNally
Mr Stephen Willis

The President therefore declared that the candidates elected by a show of hands.

- f The President announced that the Articles provided for the Immediate Past President and two other Past Presidents to sit on the Governing Body. For the ensuing year the Past Presidents on the Governing Body would be:

Mr Mike Wren
Mrs Ann Scrutton
Mr Stephen Osborne

The President thanked Brian Wadsworth for his service on the Governing Body.

- g The President announced that he was delighted to announce that he has appointed Pt. Madhava Turumella as his President's Chaplain for the year ensuing and he was invested with his badge of office. Pandit Madhava Turumella is a poet, author, commentator and world-renowned scholar of Hinduism. Active in interfaith work, fluent in no less than 6 languages, His seminal book is Humans without Borders was published last year. Thanks were given to Reverend Jeremy Crossley for his tenure as Chaplain for the past year.

5 Other business

Three Motions were received and details were circulated before the meeting.

MOTION 2: This meeting agrees to reduce the quorum for a general meeting to twenty members.

The background. Article 33.1 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association stipulates that the quorum at a general meeting shall be thirty members of the Club. Although the installation dinner has over 100 attendees, we have had less than 30 registering to attend the AGM although that number has now met the quorum. It makes practical sense to reduce the quorum to a lower figure for future meetings.

The motion was approved by a show of hands.



MOTION 3.: Proposed by Andrew Dyke and seconded by Roma Bhowmick.

The members of the United Wards' Club resolve that when official guests of the Club, including the Lord Mayor, the Lady Mayoress, the Sheriffs, the President of the City Livery Club, the Master of the Guild of Freemen and the Chairman of the Royal Society of St George and their consorts, or their appointed substitutes, are entertained at any function of the Club, they be regarded as guests of the Club rather than those member attending.

Roma Bhowmick withdrew her support before this meeting and Andrew Dyke was not present so the President asked if anyone wished to propose and second this motion. Mr David Lewis proposed and Mrs Veronica Hunt-Lewis seconded the motion.

The Directors responded as follows:

The Club's Memorandum and Articles of Association dictate that the elected directors shall have control of the Club and its property and funds and are legally responsible for the management of the Club's business, for which purpose they may exercise all the powers of the Club.

In these financially constrained times for the Club, it is neither practical or desirable for the members as a whole to dictate how the accounting of the Club takes place. The proposer knows that whilst the cost of Official Civic Guests is included in the budget and accounts for each event, actual ticket prices are dictated by what the market can bear. An example of this practice is that the 2024 Civic Lunch had a deficit of £900 including official guest's costs. This deficit of course is paid for out of our diminishing members reserves.

Geoffrey Berry commented that the Club reserves had been depleted by about £15,000 over the past years due to Covid and it was paramount that these reserves be replaced and that the club running at a deficit by paying for these guests would hamper this aim.

The motion was **NOT** carried by a show of hands.

MOTION 4: Originally Proposed by Andrew Dyke, but in his absence no other proposer was forthcoming. Roma Bhowmick had also withdrawn her support before this meeting and no other seconder was forthcoming.

The members of the United Wards' Club resolve that the Club's annual bursary to the City of London Freemen's School be not less than £1,000.

The Directors Respond as follows:

It is not realistic for the members to dictate how much donations should be. The Club has struggled financially during and since Covid which required action to be taken to reduce both central administrative costs and others. As a consequence, it was necessary to reduce the Freeman's School donation this past year. In 2023 this was topped up by members' donations. The aim, subject to further satisfactory financial performance, is to revert to paying the £1,000 during 2024 and beyond, but the Governing Body should not be forced to guarantee this level of funding in perpetuity. We must always be prudent and practical in our financial commitments and not tie the Governing Body down.

The motion could **NOT** be considered as it has not been properly proposed and seconded.



QUESTIONS

Member Valerie Hamilton had emailed the Company Secretary to ask that notification should be given when photographs are going to be taken and that during the carol service the photographer does not wander round.

This was noted and the Club will endeavour to add this on the website for each event and the photographer will be asked not to wander around the church in future.

There being no other business the President declared the meeting closed.