

**AGM, 4th October 2022, Workhouse Dining Room and on Zoom, 7pm-9pm**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Richard Taylor (Chair)(RT), David Thelwall (Treasurer)(DT), Helen Thornton (Director)(HT), Rowena Moir (online)(RM), Sally Gibbins (online)(SG), Jenny Clough (online)(JC), Helen Hatton (online)(HH), Catherine Baxter (online)(CB), Dot Bowman (DB), Lindy Webb (LW), Alison Brayshaw (AB), Moira Smith (MS), Mandy Whitehead (MWh), Amy Stow (AS), Pat Wilson (PW), Simon Crosfield (SC), Robert Ling (RL), Alexa Vernon (AV), Carrie Philip (CP), Sonja Nowicki (SN), Laura Allan (LN), Caroline Lewis-Jones (CLJ), Fiona Young (FY), Wayne Hassan (WH), Wendy Hunwick-Brown (WHB), Robert Brown (RB), David Rhodes (DR), Lauraine Helliwell (LH), Xantha Matthews (XM)

**Apologies:** Christine Orsler, Christopher Hughes, Grace Coop, Martin Webber, Yvonne Holmes, Lyn Clarke, Val Monk, Mary Lindley, Katie Higgins, Joyce Walmsley, Yvonne Ward, Mick Stanley, Frances Carroll, Carolyn Lee, Harry Fairburn, Vicki Lever

# Introduction

* RT introduced the evening and welcomed all to the meeting.

# Chairman’s Report

* RT talked about how the Trust managed to keep going through the pandemic and we were able to use funding that we received and put to good use utilising the digital market and technology
* RT wanted to mention and thank those who work behind the scenes and aren’t always visible and who kept the organisation going such as Paul Grayson and the Maintenance Team.
* Schools and visitors are coming back even though schools seemed slow at the start to get back to booking with us.
* Paranormal events and walks have been going from strength to strength and have proved to be popular. They are also a good source of revenue
* It has been good to be able to get the staff and the volunteers back together again, but we should mention those who no longer work with us for various reasons:
	+ Dave Rushton – very ill
	+ Roy and Drene Brooks – Drene, our valued colleague passed away in August 2022
	+ Tony Hirst – very ill
* The Trust is always recruiting volunteers and we have just released our new Volunteer Handbook
* We are starting our Fairer Futures Lottery Funded Project this year and are able to employ consultants to help us develop our project.
	+ Looking for work to begin onsite by 2024
	+ This project should be able to tell the story of the three museums
	+ Money from the lottery should also be able to help us with important maintenance such as crumbling masonry
* The Trust is always looking forward and has worked with different agencies and groups:
	+ We have uploaded artwork and poems that school children have written about life in the workhouse
	+ We worked with Harrogate Borough Council on a Sights and Sounds, law, and order trail
	+ With a grant from Historic England, we will be able to explore life of disabled people in the workhouse
	+ The Women in Policing exhibition has been successful and will include an online talk on 13th October
	+ We took part in the Harrogate Allotment Show which was a great way to promote the museums and last year we were given the proceeds of the show.
	+ The garden team are branching out and are setting up their archaeological finds display from the garden in the piggery such as medieval brick and pottery
	+ The garden has had a good working relationship with the Skell Valley project who have helped to rebuild the garden paths to make them safer
* We had a theatrical performance to celebrate the jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II which also tied in with Jubilee of Queen Victoria.
	+ There will be another play put on at Christmas and LA is looking for volunteers to help with that
* The Trust took part in the St Wilfrid’s parade
* We're advertising in empty shops around the town such as the old Leeds Building Society. This is free advertising space for us
* We are working with Ripon BID who have offices based in the Workhouse Museum. BID is trying to bring money into the city centre.
	+ BID helped the Trust to produce a brochure for the Heritage Open Days we had in the summer. We opened the holding cell at the Courthouse and gave free entry to the kitchen garden at the Workhouse
* Local government is in the process of being reorganised. Next year, Harrogate Borough Council will be absorbed into the new North Yorkshire Council. We need to build links with the new authority to take advantage of thus radical change.
* The Ripon Renewal Project began a couple of years ago but now seems to have stalled
* We had a celebration in the summer to celebrate RMT turning 40.
	+ We co-curated an exhibition with the community. 40 objects were picked that had special meaning to those who chose them.
	+ This helped highlight objects/parts of the museums that may not have been seen
* RT ended by thanking everyone who helps to make the place run smoothly especially HT.

# Director’s report

## Discussion

* 2021 started with the museums being closed from January until mid-May. Although we had to close, we did not have to furlough any staff
* We were able to use cultural recovery grants from the Arts Council to help us cover our costs and to begin to open again when we could. We were also able to develop projects and activities including digital, business resilience and health and wellbeing research
* Some people were reluctant to come back at first, but we are now seeing a rise in admissions again and school/group bookings. We have seen almost 50% of school bookings that we had in 2019.
* In 2021 we employed Laura Allan our community curator
* In 2021 we put on two exhibitions:
	+ 6 ply – displayed at the workhouse
	+ Art by prisoners in conjunction with the Koestler Trust which we displayed at the Prison and Police Museum
* In July 21 we were able to move the shop back out of the dining room and back into its original place. Stitch Knit and Natter have been helping to stock the shop
* The business has proved to be resilient, and we have been able to open the museums in a safe way.
* Looking towards the future, we have secured lottery funding which will help to plan for restoring the workhouse main block including the opening upstairs and installing a lift to make the area accessible.
* We will find out at the end of the month if we have an extension to the Arts Council Funding
* The Cost-of-Living Crisis is a worry to the museum and the gas and electric bills have increased which will affect the business. Action is being taken to reduce these costs.
* Teamwork and our values will help us through
* HT ended by echoing the thanks of RT. Thank you to everyone and our partners.

# Treasurer’s report

* DT began his report by thanking everyone and said that coming back after COVID took a lot of courage.
* DT reflected on 40 years of the trust and thanked Richard for his length of service and everything that he has done. RT’s networks have contributed to our success and he’s able to get people together to form a consensus.
* We have a surplus of £137k, we have had a surplus bought forward from last year.
* Trading summary – we are up on 50% of admissions than we expected
* Inflation is a major concern as there has been a 4-fold increase in our utility costs.
* DT mentioned that learning income is down, but it looks like we are getting more schools and groups back in
	+ CP asked for clarification as figures indicate that income from schools has doubled this year
	+ DT to check the figures
	+ SC asked to know how much money we are down this year compared to 2019
	+ DT to send out figures to SC for him to look at.
* The shop sales are doing well, and the figures show sales have been between £10-12,000
* In terms of commercial development, we have the Fairer Futures project starting soon and we are underway with the funding and recruiting consultants to help with this
* We are applying for a new NPO, but the new board structure should help with this as it provides more accountability and involvement from the board
* The Trust needs to develop a Performance Framework so that we can see the organisation at a glance
* LW asked about donation boxes and whether we will be seeing them in the near future.
* As an add on to this MS asked if there would be any way that we could create a button on the till to be able to accept donations. This would mean we could link it digitally to gift aid and also make it recordable on the till.
	+ DT suggested that we or the customer could fill in a paper copy of the gift aid form if we receive any case donations for now

# Appointment of independent financial examiners

## Discussion

* DT asked if we approved the continued engagement of HPH Charted Accountants in Yok
* No objections and HPH were duly approved as the Trust’s accountants

# Election of the board

## Discussion

* RT led the discussion – there are three trustees who have stepped down, Virginia Arrowsmith and Lizzy Tyler have stepped down before the AGM. Mary-Ann Irbins who officially steps down tonight. RT extended thanks to these Trustees for their service to the Trust.
* RT introduced the three new Trustees who were at the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves
	+ **Caroline Lewis-Jones**
	+ Is a CEO of one branch of the RSPCA
	+ Lives in Harrogate
	+ Is on LinkedIn should anyone want to know more about her
	+ **Steve Revell**
	+ Also lives in Harrogate
	+ Has a background in finance/digital/marketing
	+ **Amy Stow**
	+ Lives in York
	+ Has over 8 years’ experience in the museum sector
	+ Currently works in the health charity sector supporting people with MS
	+ Has been on the People Committee at RMT so knows the museums
* RT put the three candidates to the AGM. The nominations had all been previously proposed and seconded and those forms are kept on file.
	+ LW proposed they all be appointed
	+ DT seconded they all be appointed
	+ New trustees voted in with 12 member votes and have been duly appointed.

# Proposed alterations to the memorandum and articles of association (Ripon Museum Trust Constitution 14th March 2013)

## Discussion

Members are being asked to approve three changes to the Constitution tonight for the better governance of the Trust as described on the agenda and calling papers. Members needed to vote and then the Trust would propose the changes to the Charity Commission and thus approved would be made an official constitutional change.

## Online meetings

* First suggested change outlined by RT was allowing hybrid meetings – online and in person – which will allow member participants to communicate with all other participants and for their vote to be valid.
	+ RT asked for a vote from the members
	+ Change voted in with 12 votes

## Increasing the number of directors/trustees

* The second proposed change outlined by RT is to increase the number of trustees from 9 to 11
* MS asked why the board feel they need to increase the number of trustees. RT said that with current pressures being faced by the museums we feel we need to spread the load between more people to help face challenges and increasing complexity. We will also see a more diverse board with a different range of skills and expertise
* MS asked if having more people would make decision making harder. RT agreed that too many people can make decision making harder, but this is a small enough change to help but without hindering any processes.
	+ Change voted in with 12 votes

## Clarifying the limit on the terms of directors/trustees

* RT outlined changes to the length of term that can currently be served by directors/trustees.
	+ Currently at every AGM one-third – or the number nearest to one-third – of trustees/directors must retire.
	+ Trustees/directors should retire by who has served the longest term since their last appointment.
* The change should now be that directors can serve for three years; outgoing directors can be re-elected for a further three years on 2 consecutive occasions but then must step down for at least a year.
	+ Changed voted in by 12 votes

# AOB

* No AOB to record

# Short break

# 40th Anniversary talk

## Presentation by the Chair

* The three museums that we see today are not the first in Ripon
	+ The very first one was in a building demolished to make the Ripon Spa Gardens
	+ Then there was a museum in Thorpe Prebend House which closed in the 1950s
	+ Some of the contents were moved to the back of the Wakeman’s House in the Market Place but this was closed in the 1970s
	+ The Civic Society then created a temporary Victorian Cottage Museum in a house near the Cathedral
* One of the main players in then setting up the museums was Dr John Whitehead who had the idea of converting the former police station into the Trust’s first museum.
* A new body was set up in 1982 as an ‘off-shoot’ to the Civic Society
* The first group of people who set up the museum were not museum professionals but did a creditable job and indeed one of the exhibits set up is still in the P&P today – the cell with the mannequin and the crank handle.
* In 1989 RT was appointed to run the Civic Trust Ripon Project with his experience as a town planner. RT was able to help the museum become more visible around Ripon.
* In 2002 the Trust received Heritage Lottery funding which helped to buy a portion of the building next door to extend the museum.
* In 2004 the museum reopened with a new reception/shop/toilets and lift
* The standard of the museum was improved, and its collection has continued to grow so that now every Yorkshire police force ever to have existed is now represented.
* In 1996 the Ripon Civic Trust was able to lease a portion of the former Workhouse which was being used as offices and storage by North Yorkshire County Council
* The Workhouse Museum was opened in 1996 in the vagrants’ block
	+ The original ‘till’ consisted of three rolls of bus tickets
	+ The school room was at the end of the vagrants’ cells
	+ Dr Whitehead was able to create innovative displays such as preserving bread in formaldehyde which can still be seen today
	+ There was a restoration of the vagrants block in 2008-9 and the Guardian’s room was reinstated with help from Lottery Funding
	+ Separate funding was secured for the restoration of the railings and the kitchen garden.
	+ In 2017 we were able to purchase most of the site including the main block with more help from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Recently they have provided development funding towards a scheme for restoration and opening up of more of the site.
* The Courthouse ceased operations in 1998 and the Cathedral was able to acquire it soon after. The Trust has been able to lease the historic court rooms as our third museum.
	+ Bess Chapman – who had been a magistrate – became voluntary curator at the Courthouse
	+ Paint samples had been taken and the museum was repainted in 2005 in its original colours.
	+ Bess created a display about transportation
	+ When the museum opened there was a re-enactment of 1830s moving prisoners
	+ Since then the displays have been refreshed.

RT concluded by saying he was proud of what had been achieved and looked forward to the museums continuing to develop and flourish.

7.2 Presentation of Panel to RT

* HT presented a commemorative panel to RT to thank him for his hard work over the past 30 years.