

**Minutes of Branch Committee Meeting:  
Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012  
The Fox & Crown, Appleton Gate, Newark**

**Present:** Ramona Usher, Stephen Bradwell, Jane Roylance, Mark Strawbridge, Rachel Booth, Chris McKinney, Rose Thompson, Roy Lewis, Liz Mayle & Robert Walker

1. **Apologies:** Jason Mordan, Neil Robertson, Fiona Newton

Before starting the meeting proper Jane introduced Ramona Usher as the new Leicestershire County Representative.

2. **Minutes of the Last Meeting:** subject to the changes set out in the Agenda, the Minutes were approved as a true record.
3. **Matters Arising:** Jane suggested that any issues were to be considered as the meeting progresses.
4. **Chair's Report:** Jane noted that she had sent an e-mail to Eleanor McEvedy regarding a possible visit to the Dreadnought factory.

Jane had also been in contact with Robert Woodhead Ltd who are working on the Heritage Skills Centre at Lincoln Castle along with Bowmans who are repairing the curtain walls. There may be opportunity to organise a Branch visit while the works were on-going in preference to a visit to the BGS at Keyworth. Roy pointed out that the Lincoln Castle project was the largest conservation project in the country at the moment.

Chris asked whether this would be a suitable visit for the AGM, Jane said that the works would be almost finished by then so an earlier visit would be preferable.

Jane also noted that the Branch still had to consider a suitable venue for a meeting in the southern part of the Branch's area.

Jane also noted that she had not yet contacted Catherine Dove following last year's Annual School. Rachel also agreed to find out more information about a visit to Stanford Hall and provide Jane with potential contacts so that the Branch could organise a visit. Rachel also noted that mention had been made of the Sessions House in Northampton at the AGM.

**[Action: Rachel to provide information regarding contacts for Stanford Hall visit]**

5. **Branch Representatives Report:** Roy noted that the last full Council meeting had been held at the Theatres Trust in December, and that the Council meeting had been followed by a session on "Governance".

The highlights of the meeting included a discussion on changing the concessionary membership rates and the overall increase in membership.

Roy also noted that the Branch's Business Plan had been approved.

Roy also noted that changes to the planning regime in the light of the Penfold Review were back on the agenda and in particular the loss of conservation area consent which may mean that it was less of an offence to demolish buildings in Conservation Areas. Liz noted that the Penfold Review had been discussed by the Lincolnshire COG and there was concern about the potential changes. Liz also noted that a timetable for the review had already been agreed.

Roy added that John Preston had resigned as Education Officer.

It was also reported that the next Annual School in Winchester was progressing well, with the 2013 School set to be held in Cumbria/Carlisle.

Roy also noted that there was some concern about the impact of the "Green Deal" initiative to provide greater energy efficiency by installing external insulation to solid wall houses. Roy asked whether anyone knew of any examples of this type of insulation being applied to historic buildings.

- 6 **Treasurers Report:** Rose noted that there was £390.74 in the current account and £189.85 in the deposit account.

Rose also noted that she would now ask the IHBC for additional funds to support the Branch's "cheap and cheerful" events and also to cover the bursary award to the Winchester Annual School.

Jane agreed to draft a letter inviting applications applications for this year's Bursary for the Annual School from the Branch membership.

The Committee also agreed that an 'early bird' reservation should be made for the Annual School.

7. **Membership Report:** Mark noted that there had been one membership application this year, from Tom Street of Rushcliffe Borough Council. Rob noted that as this was Tom's first job since leaving college, it was likely that his application would be carefully scrutinised to ensure that he had demonstrated competence in all the required areas.

Roy noted that at the last Council meeting Lloyd Mills and Alan Munn had been upgraded to full membership, however four members had been lost.

8. **County Representative's Report:** In the absence of Neil, Chris noted that Alan Morrison and Barry Joyce were due to retire at the end of March.

*Leicestershire:* Ramona Usher noted the next COG meeting was to be held in Coalville with an afternoon visit to Moira Furnace. At the last meeting there had also been a discussion about the Penfold Review and also a demonstration of a Welsh Slate cut to look like a Swithland Slate.

*Lincolnshire:* Liz noted that the last meeting in Lincoln has discussed a countywide initiative to try to cut lead theft from churches and the potential arrangement for churches to install alarms, guided by conservation expertise, in advance of listed building consent where they were not prominent and did harm historic fabric.

*Northamptonshire:* Rachel noted that the last meeting was held at Wellingborough and there was also discussion of the Penfold Review.

*Nottinghamshire:* Jason had sent a report in his absence. Ramona added that Peter Smith, Nottingham City's Conservation Officer, was retiring in March and it was unclear as to whether this post would be filled.

9. **Governance Review:** Roy noted that there had been discussion at Council regarding the organisation of the IHBC following advice that it did not fit well with the standard model for a charity in that the Council was too large and too similar in its composition. The Charity Commissioners preferred smaller organisations with a diverse range of skills.

So the issue for discussion was whether the IHBC was being run on the most appropriate lines and a review into the operation of the IHBC was being carried out.

Rob wondered whether the present organisation had been perceived as a weakness and whether there was any benefit if we had different specialist people on Council.

Roy felt that one of the benefits of the present organisation was that every region was represented and there was a clear link between the Branches and Council.

Mark considered that this review was about probity, to consider whether it was more appropriate to broaden the interests of the Council membership. Rob wondered whether the concern was about the possibility of parochial interests influencing decisions that were not necessarily in the best interest of the IHBC as a whole.

Chris thought that whilst the IHBC should be run in the most appropriate way the review could help to justify our present structure.

Rob summed up the issue noting that it was always best if management understood what they were managing.

10. **Branch Connection Day:** Chris reported on the recent Branch Connection Day looking at ways to engage with the public to promote the IHBC (notes attached). It was noted that the IHBC has the potential to produce good stories but press releases needed to avoid dry academic statements, they needed a more personable approach to attract journalistic interest.

Mark noted having someone else say something about you was a very effective means of promotion.

Chris noted that the IHBC was trying to be more outreaching in the media and more recognisable and were looking to pitch stories at national and local levels in tandem.

Mark noted that in modern social media the speed of engagement/disengagement was very quick and to engage with people, there was a need to personalise the message.

11. **Branch Communications:** To reach out to Branch members it had already been decided to hold a meeting outside of Newark. Chris noted that the web site was the public face of the Branch and as such it needed to be interesting and encourage people to come back to it and needed a good flow of information relating to Branch activities.

Stephen wondered whether there should be a section to cover the main issues being discussed by the COG's, to show that each group was debating similar issues and to encourage the spread of information. Chris noted that the present IHBC web site was not always friendly and accessible and Chris had redrafted the Branch web-page to present a more friendly approach along with the more factual information. Rob suggested that Chris should be more formally recognised as the Branch's Communications Officer, although it was considered that this needed to be decided by the AGM.

Chris noted that the revised web site could refer to the potential Branch visits and invite suggestions as to a suitable venue for the AGM.

Stephen also suggested lifting the reports of the various site visits from the AGM papers to show the various activities that the Branch had been engaged in.

12. **Peripatetic Meeting:** This had already been discussed.
13. **AOB:** Roy referred to recent correspondence regarding secondary glazing.
14. **Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March.
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