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BUILDING · CONSERVATION

**Notice of Annual General Meeting of South West Branch  
To be held on Wednesday 22nd November 2023**

**At 3.00pm**

**Bridgwater Arts Centre**  
11-13 Castle Street, Bridgwater  
Somerset TA6 3DD

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** Greg Venn (Treasurer); Liz Smith Gibbons (Membership Secretary) Stephen Guy (Historic England Representative); Jonathan Taylor (Training and Events); Charlotte Bowles-Lewis (Gloucester, Bristol and Bath Representative); James Webb (Dorset Representative); Samantha Barnes (Cornwall Representative); Gabriella Herrick (acting Private Practice Representative); Kim Miller (acting Council Representative); Alex Marsh (Bulletin Editor); Belle Richer Hill; Tony Garratt; Pippa Card; Helen Garside; Harvey Faulkner-Aston; Graham Lawrence; Kate Hudson-McAulay; Eleanor Ward; Ullin Jodah McStea.

**1. Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Committee Members: Maureen Pearce (Chair), Jill Himsworth (Secretary), Adrian Neilson (Somerset County and Bath Representative).
- 1.2 Other Members: Jill Channer; Paul Butler; Kate Baxter Hunter.
- 1.3 From the floor: none
- 1.4 The meeting was chaired by Charlotte Bowles Lewis. The IHBC SW branch committee introduced themselves.

**2. Minutes of last Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at Northern Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL21 2EP**

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting. This was proposed by Graham Lawrence and seconded by Liz Smith Gibbons.
- 2.2 Matters arising covered under 'Exchange of information'

### **3. Chair's report**

- 3.1 The proposed windows conference was postponed due to SPAB running a similar event (which was also ultimately cancelled). We plan to revisit running our event in Autumn 2024.
- 3.2 The IHBC SW branch committee are now working on a one-day cob conference in Exeter; the date for your diaries is 21 March 2024.
- 3.3 Your committee is also developing links with the RTPI and will be discussing a potential joint in the new year.
- 3.4 Maureen Pearce sits on the All-party Parliamentary Group which has been discussing NDAs and the value of heritage. Further information can be found online at: <https://www.highstreettaskforce.org.uk/resources/details/?id=46f0e580-1734-438d-9733-d0e909b2f841>
- 3.5 Tony Garratt's concerns over the workload of LPA Conservation Officers were raised at a recent IHBC Central meeting.
- 3.6 The IHBC SW branch Business Plan runs until 2025, and will be circulated alongside the meeting minutes.
- 3.7 The branch continues to support and feed into the centrally run MATE sessions.
- 3.8 If anyone would like to contribute to the IHBC SW bulletins, please contact Alex Marsh.

### **4. Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts for year ending September 2023**

- 4.1 Greg Venn, Branch Treasurer ran through the end of year financial return from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and explained the various amounts. The Treasurer noted that there has been an increase in interest and other bank charges.
- 4.2 The balance at the end of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 was £11,124.41. GV confirmed that our branch accounts are audited centrally, and that our account is actually part of the IHBC Central monies.

### **5. Appointment of Chair and Branch Officers, including vacant posts**

- 5.1 Resignations have been received from Maureen Pearce, Chair and Devon County Representative; and Guy Bentham Hill, Wiltshire Representative. CBL thanked both Maureen and Guy for all their work over the years on behalf of the SW committee.
- 5.2 The following committee members agreed to stand and were re-elected unopposed:

Treasurer – Greg Venn

Secretary – Jill Himsworth

Membership Secretary – Liz Smith Gibbons

Historic England Representative – Stephen Guy

Training and Events Officer – Jonathan Taylor

Gloucestershire, Bristol and Bath Representative – Charlotte Bowles Lewis

Dorset Representative – James Webb

Somerset County Representative – Adrian Neilson

Cornwall Representative – Samantha Barnes  
Bulletin Editor – Alex Marsh

This was proposed by Tony Garratt and seconded by Ullin Jodah McStea.

- 5.3 Charlotte Bowles Lewis has offered to take on the role of Chair, with James Webb taking on the role of Vice-Chair.

Gabriella Herrick has been acting Private Practice Representative since March 2023. Kim Miller has been acting Council Representative since September 2023. Belle Richer Hill has offered to take on the role of Devon County Representative, and Kate Hudson McAulay has offered to take on the role of Policy and Consultations officer.

This was proposed by Tony Garratt and seconded by Harvey Faulkner-Aston.

- 5.4 No nominations have been received for the Wiltshire Representative. This role is currently being undertaken by Liz Smith Gibbons, but this role is available should someone wish to take it on.

- 5.5 Maureen Pearce will remain on the committee as immediate past chair.

- 5.6 Tony Garratt raised that he is now on the IHBC Central Equality Committee. He provided some information about the percentage of diagnosed neurodivergent (autistic) planning officers within the local authority. He also said that there is a 48% female / 52% male gender split in IHBC membership, but that there are a higher number of fully-accredited men.

The possible reasons for this, and alternatives to the current accreditation application process for neurodivergent members, are being discussed on the committee. A short general conversation about this was had amongst the attendees.

## **6. Exchange of information**

- 6.1 Feedback on workload issues as raised by Tony Garratt at the 2022 AGM was read out by CBL. The summary in terms of the issues raised by TG at last year's AGM and the branch's actions will be circulated with the meeting minutes.

- 6.2 Tony Garratt mentioned the current situation at Somerset Council, which may result in a lost of staff across the authority. LSG added that Bristol CC have also lost 30% of their planning officers. This was also noted in the news on the day of the AGM:- (Bristol Post) ([Bristol planning backlog caused by council department losing over a third of its staff - Bristol Live \(bristolpost.co.uk\)](https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-planning-backlog-caused-by-council-department-losing-over-a-third-of-its-staff-2023-09-14/))

- 6.3 LSG also noted that local authorities in general are reluctant or refuse to spend on training for officers. GV raised that the IHBC has a Professional Code of Conduct, and that perhaps this could be presented to local authorities to put pressure on the requirement for them to allow/provide training for their professional staff

## **7. Any other business**

- 7.1 GV concluded with a note that requests for future training are always welcome. One suggestion was the theme of enforcement and UWNs.

- 7.2 There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 15.50.

The day also included a series of presentations from Professor Jonathan Edwards on retrofitting, with an emphasis on historic buildings. This was open to non-members and 72 people attended.

**Post meeting note**

Please find below the last 2023 Virtual MATE date:

Full application support - 12th December 2.00 – 5.00pm online.

See IHBC events calendar for full details and booking links.

DRAFT