MINUTES of the Twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Henbury Society held at the Church Hall on Thursday 15th May 2014

1. Apologies for Absence

John & Claire Mortin, Peter Wells, Valerie Mead

2. Minutes of the 2013 AGM

The 2013 minutes were available, having previously been accepted at the Committee Meeting on the 11th September 2013.

3. Treasurer’s Report

Robert Wilding presented the annual report for the previous financial year. The amount received from membership subscriptions was down on the previous year. The cost of membership would remain the same. It was suggested that more effort should be made to collect the subscriptions from those households not at present paying. The question of Henbury Travel sponsorship of the Web Site was also raised. The closing balance was £3,942.87.

Thanks to Robert for preparing the information and to Roger Cresswell for auditing the accounts.


Below is a transcript of Sir Francis Graham-Smith’s report:

When I retired as Chairman, the Henbury Society did me the honour of making me President. Traditionally the President has no duties, but when the Society’s excellent Chairman Rex Beach left Henbury last year the Committee wanted a temporary replacement who had experience of planning matters. This was because Henbury, along with the rest of East Cheshire, was immersed in another planning crisis. Rex therefore handed over some already bulky files, and I carried on his good work.
First, a brief history. In 1989 a group of Henbury residents were alarmed by a proposal to extend the Blacksmiths Arms pub to a 32-bed hotel. Supported by a submission signed by 170 residents, they were successful at a Local Enquiry in opposing the proposal, and decided to form a society with the first objective:

(i) To promote high standards of planning and architecture in Henbury

A major plan, proposed by local government in 1994, to develop part of the green belt between Henbury and Macclesfield for housing and a new road, was vigorously opposed by the Society in collaboration with the Parish Council, again at a Local Inquiry and again successfully. After a long interval, the Society has again been active in relation to the Local Plan, in which Cheshire East Council was required to set out allocations of land for a large number of new houses. A draft of this Plan in 2013 showed a large portion of Green Belt land between the A537 Chelford Road and the A536 Congleton Road as allocated for housing, with a new road which would connect through to the London Road. The Society objected to the loss of Green Belt land, which at present forms a clear separation between Henbury and Macclesfield, and also objected to a proposal for a road through this allocation which would bring further traffic on to the already heavily loaded A537.

In a second draft, the Plan proposed that this large portion of land should be ‘safeguarded’, meaning that it would not be developed until the year 2030. Our objections were redoubled, and as you know the final version of the Plan now leaves the designation as Green Belt untouched.

You will see that the Henbury Society followed many years of relative inactivity with a period of intense and effective activity. Without the Society we might well be faced with a merging of Henbury with Macclesfield and a dreadful traffic situation on the main road. Fortunately the Society had remained well organised and ready for the challenge. For several years there were occasional social events, although these are now well catered for by the Henbury Events Committee. The Society has, however, been active in pursuing its two other objectives:

(ii) To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of Henbury.

(iii) To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in Henbury.

To follow the book *Henbury the History of a Village*, published in 2003, we collaborated with the Parish Council in producing the Parish Plan, and we have published a series of *Occasional Notes* on local walks, the Henbury Archive, and *Henbury Today*, a guide to the village. A fourth Occasional Note, on the Old School, has just been printed and is available at this AGM.

You will see that the Society, although scarcely visible for long intervals, has established and maintained a vital position in the life and health of Henbury, and has acted vigorously in the recurrent major planning issues. I urge every resident to continue their support through the quieter times that we may now expect for the next few years.

Finally, but not least, I would like to thank the Committee for their support, and particularly Monica Lemecha who has acted so efficiently as webmaster. Monica wishes to retire from this important task, having moved away from Henbury. Is there anyone with modest IT skills who could take this on?

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It was agreed that the Society should continue in its present form for the time being.

Some people are not getting notification by e-mail of new items on the website. It was agreed that the web-site is very good.

5. **Election of the following Executive Committee members:**

The following Members of the Executive Committee were elected.

- **President:** Sir Francis Graham-Smith
- **Chairman:** Roger Cousin
- **Vice Chairman:** Position not filled
- **Treasurer:** Robert Wilding
- **Secretary:** Christine Featherstone

6. **Re-election of following Committee members:**

Gwen Davies, John Russell, Fiona Smith, Sylvia Warburton, Peter Wells, Michael Wootton, Trevor Newton, Liz Welton were re-elected.

The question of whether the position of Vice-chairman was necessary will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

7. **Launch of Occasional Notes No.4**

Memories of a Village School: David Windsor gave a brief summary of the project which he has a very keen interest in following on from Elizabeth Graham-Smith’s request for information from people who attended the school.

8. **Any Other Business**

No items

**Henbury Environmental Landscape Project**

Dr Simon Browne gave a very interesting talk on the survey plan following the HPC environmental plan of 2008. He updated the Society on the hedge and tree planting plan since it was started in 2010. The new hedgerows are providing a buffer between Broken Cross and Henbury as well as linking other areas together. A total of 700 hours of effort has been provided by 47 volunteers.

Thanks to Christine Featherstone and Gwen Davies for making the arrangements for the AGM.
Minutes prepared by .................................
Christine Featherstone (Secretary)