



**THE SHAKESPEARE CLUB OF STRATFORD UPON AVON
192nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2016**

Held at the Shakespeare Institute, Church St., Stratford upon Avon
Tuesday, 11th October 2016 at 7.15 pm

Minutes

1. Election of Chair for the AGM.

Susan Brock was proposed by Jean Lawrance, seconded by Deb Follett, agreed *nem con*.

2. Apologies for absence.

John and Margaret Cunnington, John and Kay Bellinger, David Geldard. The Chair announced the death of member Mary Helyar.

3. Present

32 members were present.

4. Minutes of the last AGM (8 September) and EGM (9 February 2016).

1. These were accepted as a correct record with the following correction to the AGM minutes 4.2 : The correct URL for Shakespeare Club website is www.stratfordshakespeareclub.org.uk.

5. Matters arising from the minutes.

1. Celebrating Shakespeare in 2016 would be taken later in the agenda.

6. Treasurer's report

Deb Follett circulated the accounts for the year ending April 2016 (and 2015 for comparison). The major costs of lecturers' fees, room hire, insurance, printing, President's dinner and Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations were much the same as in 2015. There was a small loss on the lunch held in May because the Club had entertained a few guests at the Club's expense. The stock of silver pins was now all sold and paid for at no cost to the Club.

£1000 had been allocated towards the costs of *The Story of the Shakespeare Club*, which would be paid back eventually from sales. On the advice of the accountant costs and receipts for the book were going through the Club's bank account. Subscription income in 2015/6 was lower than in 2014/5. There were 99 paid-up members in 2015/6 compared to over 100 in the previous year. Raffle and bar takings were also down. The subscription fee had been raised to £18 but only 73 members had renewed for 2016/7 so the financial outlook was still poor. The Treasurer urged all members to encourage friends etc. to join. Nevertheless there was still a healthy balance at the end of the financial year.

7. Election of Honorary Treasurer.

The Chair proposed that Deb Follett be re-elected; seconded by Roger Taylor; elected *nem con*.

8. Appointment of Honorary Accountant.

The Chair proposed that H.L. Barnes be asked to continue; seconded by Mary Reardon, agreed *nem con*.

9. Election of Administrative Secretary.

Deb Follett proposed that Susan Brock be re-elected as Administrative Secretary, seconded by Mary Reardon, and elected *nem con*.

10. Election of the Committee.

The Chair explained that the Committee for 2015/6 comprised eight members as follows: Janet Anslow, Jean Lawrance, Mary Reardon, Eileen Geldard, Paul Prescott, Margaret Cunnington, John Cunnington, Sylvia Morris. All were willing to stand again.

The Chair proposed that all existing members be re-elected, seconded by Jill Ashley-Smith, and elected *nem con*.

Club rules allowed for 10 members of the Committee in addition to the administrative secretary and treasurer and the following nominations had been received for the two vacant places:

- Rev. Roger Taylor, proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Sylvia Morris.
- Christine Walsh, proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Sylvia Morris.

Both were elected *nem con*.

11. Change to rules.

The Committee recommended, on the advice of the Stratford Town Trust, the following change to the Club Rules (2011 revised Feb. 2016) applying to the dissolution of the Club in order to facilitate grant applications to a wide range of bodies:

‘Should the Club be dissolved for any reason, and in order to conform with the requirements of the Town Trust, after having received a grant from that organisation, all monies remaining in the Club’s bank accounts will be distributed to local charities or organisations as agreed by members of the Club at a general meeting.’

Delete: ‘and in order to conform with the requirements of the Town Trust, after having received a grant from that organisation’

This was agreed *nem con*.

10. Report on programme for the 2016/7 season.

The Chair read out the programme for 2016/7 and spoke about the achievements of the President for the season, Sir Richard Eyre, formerly Director of the National Theatre.

11. Report on Club activities 2016

a. History of the Club publicity, etc.

The Chair reported that *The Story of the Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon 1824-2016* would be published on 1 November 2016. 63 copies had been reserved by subscribers in advance. The remainder would be sold at £12.99 direct to the public via the Club website www.stratfordshakespeareclub.org.uk and in local bookshops in the first instance. Depending on sales it might be made available online at Amazon in the new year. She encouraged friends and contacts to order direct for the

Club to avoid payment of a percentage to third parties. The authors thanked the Club for its financial and moral support in the past year, especially its marketing team Chris Walsh, Jane and Roger Taylor and Jami Rogers. Its publication would be used to promote the Club and the authors already had engagements with the Friends of the Birthplace Trust in January, the Stratford Society in February, King Edward VI School in April and were making arrangements with Heart of England U3A History Group and Escape Arts at the Slaughterhouse. Having been turned down by the Town Trust for a grant towards publishing costs, an application was being drafted for equipment for a pop-up exhibition about the Club, with printed publicity material.

b. Support for trainee Shakespeare teachers

The Chair read a report from John and Margaret Cunnington:

‘Members should be aware that the outcome of the decision to support the visit of two postgraduate student teachers to a performance by the RSC was an unqualified success. This followed a suggestion from one of last season’s speakers Joan Foley that the Club might help young teachers. The two young English graduates who were funded had never been to Stratford before and had never attended a performance of a play by Shakespeare.

We had the pleasure of meeting the two young women after the performance and were left in no doubt as to the impact that the day had upon them. They had visited the Birthplace in the morning before attending the performance of *Cymbeline*. The production of the latter had been a revelation to them and they were bubbling with enthusiasm. Their future teaching will be informed by the day, and the multiplier effect of their enthusiasm upon the young people that they influence will be significant.’

c. Lunch 6 May 2016

The Chair reported that 55 members attended the lunch at the Falcon on 6 May to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first seeds of the idea of a Shakespeare Club and the 192nd season of the Club. Robert Lister was the Chairman and led members and guests through a programme of toasts, readings and songs from the early days of the Club delivered by Club members, Roger Taylor, Jean Lawrance and James Stredder who gave a lively impersonation of antiquarian and snob, Captain James Saunders.

d. World Shakespeare Congress Tea Monday 1 August 2016

The Chair reported that selected delegates to the World Shakespeare Congress were invited to join Club members for tea at Holy Trinity Church on the first day of the Congress. About 25 attended together with the Club’s President Peter Kyle, and some of the Club’s past Presidents, including Jane Lapotaire (President 1996-7). There was an abundance of home-made cakes and biscuits (for which the Chair thanked baking members) and tours of the church were available for the visitors. The Club’s Life Vice President Roger Pringle spoke briefly about the history and the significance of the Club and the opportunity was taken to advertise the forthcoming publication of the Club’s history.

12. 2016/7 Raffle

The Chair reported that John and Margaret Cunnington had kindly offered to organise this as usual in January. Shakespeare Books and Bottle would be collected at November and December meetings.

13. Any other business.

1. *Refreshments at meetings:* The Chair reported that the University of Birmingham were reviewing their licensing arrangements and it might not be possible to continue to serve wine before and after Club meetings. Rebecca White would confirm arrangements as soon as possible.
2. *Club activities:* The Chair reported suggestions that members might be interested in activities additional to the lecture programme, e.g. play readings, theatre visits, a theatre review group or informal lunches. She asked for other ideas. Members willing to be lead organisers for a one-off or occasional event or regular meetings of sub-groups were asked to contact a member of the Committee if they wished to put themselves forward. Extra activities were at present beyond the resources of the Committee.
3. *Announcement from the Friends of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust:* The Chair drew attention of members to *The Quest for Shakespeare's Garden*: Roy Strong will be speaking on Tuesday 18 October at 7pm in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, Shakespeare Centre. Tickets £12 from any of the Shakespeare Houses.

The AGM ended at 7.45 and was followed by the regular meeting.