

**THE SHAKESPEARE CLUB OF STRATFORD UPON AVON  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 2022**

Held on Zoom on Tuesday, 11th October 2022 at 7.20 pm.  
Voting was by a show of hands. 21 members attended.

**MINUTES**

1. **Election of Chair for the AGM.** Susan Brock was nominated by Sylvia Morris, seconded by Penelope Westwood
2. **Apologies for absence:** Chris Walsh (Treasurer) and Pen Hughes sent their apologies
3. **Minutes of the last AGM** on 5 October 2021. These were proposed by Karolyn Brookes, seconded by Sandra MacDonald. They were approved unanimously.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes.** No issues were raised.
5. **Treasurer's report.** This was distributed in advance. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chair spoke to the report. The audited accounts from the Accountant had not yet been received but will be distributed to members by email. Memberships stand at around 50. The Club has a healthy balance, the result of holding few in-person meetings and holds a substantial contingency fund. It is expected that given the return to full meetings this will change. The Methodist Hall is a more expensive venue than the Shakespeare Institute, and fees for speakers have been increased to £100. Expenses are also expected to rise in line with inflation. The Chair proposed the report should be accepted, seconded by Sylvia Morris. The report was approved.
6. **Elections of Officers and Committee.** The Chairman proposed that owing to the exceptionally difficult circumstances of the past two years that the Club's Constitution adopted in 2017 should be suspended for a year in relation to the appointment of officers and members of the committee who would normally have to stand down after five years. Proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Sylvia Morris. The proposal was approved. unanimously with no abstentions.
7. **Election of Honorary Treasurer.** Ms Christine Walsh (first elected to the post in 2017) was willing to stand again. She was proposed by Sylvia Morris and seconded by Penelope Westwood. The proposal was passed. unanimously with no abstentions.
8. **Appointment of Honorary Accountant.** It was proposed that H.L. Barnes be invited to continue to audit the Club's Accounts. Proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Ros Haigh. The proposal was passed unanimously with no abstentions. It was suggested that the Treasurer should send a letter of thanks once the Accounts have been received.
9. **Ratification of the Election of President 2022-3**  
Dame Harriet Walter was elected President of the Shakespeare Club at the last meeting in May. This vote is now required to be ratified. Proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Sylvia Morris. Passed unanimously with no abstentions.
10. **Election of Administrative Secretary.**  
Mrs Sylvia Morris (first elected to the post in 2018) is willing to stand again. Proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Maureen Bourniquel. The proposal was passed unanimously with no abstentions.
11. **Election of the Committee.**  
The Chairman thanked all members of the Committee for their services over the past year. The following Committee members are willing to stand again: Janet Anslow, Susan Brock. They were proposed by Susan Brock, seconded by Sandra Macdonald and elected unanimously with no abstentions. The following committee members have stood down: Mary Reardon, Sandra MacDonald (due to ill health), Eileen Geldard, Helen Hargest and Margo Galvin.. Sandra MacDonald hopes to return when her health improves and volunteered to Chair the occasional

meeting this season. The Chairman thanked those standing down for their services which in some cases have continued over many years.

Nominations for the Committee have been received for Karolyn Brookes (proposed by Sylvia Morris and seconded by Susan Brock) and Melissa Mailer-Yates, a former committee member who stood down in 2021 (proposed by Susan Brock and seconded by Sylvia Morris). They were each elected unanimously with no abstentions

Six vacancies remain. The Chairman asked for volunteers to be co-opted onto the committee and Lindsay MacDonald put himself forward. Any members who would like to become members of the Committee are warmly encouraged to contact the Chairman or Secretary by email.

Retiring committee member Helen Hargest said how much she had enjoyed her time on the committee from which she has only retired because she has relocated to Cumbria.

- 12. Report on programme for the forthcoming 2022-3 season.** The Chairman noted that the post of Programme Secretary was still vacant, but that she continued to take on the role for the time being. Dame Harriet Walter had been scheduled to give her presidential address at the December meeting but is now travelling to the US for filming on the same day. Her talk is to be rescheduled and members will be kept fully informed.

The season will open on 18 October with Professor Ewan Fernie on “Everything to Everybody”: the Birmingham Shakespeare Library and will continue on 8 November with Dr Jami Rogers speaking on British Black and Asian Shakespearians. In January we will welcome Dr Ella Hawkins on Shakespeare in Elizabethan Costume, February Roger Pringle on Thomas Hardy’s 1896 trip to Stratford-upon-Avon, and March will be a joint meeting with the Stratford Society when Rupert Harris will talk about the conservation of the 1769 statue of Shakespeare. In April Dr Harry McCarthy will talk about Boy actors on Shakespeare’s stage and (to be confirmed) Sonia Massai will talk about accents and dialects in Shakespeare performance to close the season in May. Details, when finalised, will be placed on the website but members will also be emailed with the full schedule and also reminded each month.

The idea of recorded meetings was raised: Lena Orlin had both given a live address and, some days later, recorded her talk which was then made available to members on YouTube for a few days. It was agreed that in future speakers should be asked if they were willing to make a similar recording and investigations into the possibility of making recordings of talks continue.

Sylvia Morris thanked the people who had volunteered to help with putting out and putting away chairs for meetings: Stephen Sharp, Jenny Whybrow, Bryan Collett and Richard Morris. She will contact them asap. Non-alcoholic drinks, and nibbles, will be provided free of charge at the end of the meeting on 18 October to encourage people to socialise.

Sandra MacDonald formally thanked Susan Brock, Sylvia Morris and Chris Walsh for keeping the Club going over the unprecedented past couple of years.

- 13. Report on Club activities 2021-22** The Administrative Secretary spoke to her report on this and Communications (given in full at the end of the minutes). She asked members for suggestions about how communication with potential members could be improved.
- 14. Report on Website and Communications.** Combined with the previous point.
- 15. Any other Business** – Sandra MacDonald raised the need for a first-aider to be present at meetings. Maureen Bourniquel volunteered as did Jane Gee though neither are up to date first-aiders. Sylvia Morris to check on facilities at the Methodist Hall. A list of other qualified helpers would be made after a call out to members.
- Lindsay MacDonald suggested that the Club could hold a public debate on the contentious issue of the Authorship of Shakespeare’s plays, and it was agreed that this would be considered by the Committee

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

*Shakespeare Club of Stratford-upon-Avon Secretary’s report October 2022*

The Club has continued to be affected by the COVID 19 pandemic though restrictions were lifted

**during the year. Negotiations continue with the Shakespeare Institute regarding returning for meetings but for the coming season meetings will be held at the Methodist Hall, Old Town.**

**a) Meetings**

Following the success of virtual meetings, the Club continued to offer these for most talks. Six meetings were made available virtually including a version of Lena Orlin's Presidential Address in April which was specially recorded after she had delivered it in person and made available free of charge to members and the mailing list. These six meetings received 734 views, an average of 138 for the virtual-only meetings. In person meetings resumed in March with the reading for *Shakespeare's Coming Home!* in March.

**b) Celebrating Shakespeare's Birthday in Stratford-upon-Avon**

The Club successfully took part in the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations in April. We were delighted that our President, Professor Lena Orlin led members of the Club in the traditional procession. The video created in 2021 for Shakespeare's Birthday celebrations has now received 390 views on the website.

**c) Shakespeare's Coming Home!**

The Club took part in this community project raising funds for the restoration of the 1769 statue of Shakespeare on the Town Hall. The Club read *All's Well That Ends Well* with a cast that included President Professor Lena Orlin and members. The reading was organised by Committee member Sandra MacDonald and members, locals, and visitors, attended the reading on 12 March. The Club was able to make a substantial donation to the fund over and above the £500 suggested.

**d) A Walk round Holy Trinity Church**

On 28 June, 25 members enjoyed *A Walk round Shakespeare's Church* led by Rev Dr Paul Edmondson in the imaginary company of William Shakespeare himself, and organised by Sandra MacDonald.

**Communications and Web**

**e) Mailing list**

The mailing list has continued to grow and now stands at 280.

**f) Publication**

An article on the Club was published in February 2022's *Focus* magazine (issued with the *Stratford-on-Avon Herald*).

**g) Web**

The website continues to be kept up to date and remains a valuable communication tool.

Holding meetings online has been an interesting and positive experience and the Club will continue to use this method from time to time. Ways in which meetings could be recorded for those unable to attend are also being investigated. The Club remains open to new directions and welcomes ideas from the membership who are encouraged to join the Committee.

Sylvia Morris

October 2022