

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OLD EDINBURGH CLUB, FOR THE YEAR 2020–2021

## MINUTE OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB HELD AS AN ONLINE MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.00PM

The meeting was opened by the Right Honourable Frank Ross, the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh and Honorary Patron of The Old Edinburgh Club. He extended a warm welcome to all members and complimented the Club on its achievements during the past year, not least in maintaining activities in the face of the COVID–19 pandemic. He called on Club to play its part in ‘building back better’ as the city recovers.

Our President, Peter Graham, thanked the Lord Provost for his welcome and encouraging words and confirmed that the Club would indeed respond to his challenge. He strongly hoped that we would be meeting in person in the City Chambers next year at our AGM.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from 25 members.

## PRESENT

The online attendance of 73 members was recorded.

MINUTE OF THE AGM HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2020  
Approved as an accurate record. (The minute is printed on pp. 115–  
116 of Volume 16 of the Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, 2020.)

## ITEMS FOR INCLUSION UNDER OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There were no additional items.

## ANNUAL REPORT AND PRESIDENT’S REVIEW

As President, Peter Graham gave his thanks to members of the OEC Council, particularly for their contributions to promoting the Club and to planning our events programme, along with the efficient running of the Club and good member relationships. He highlighted the latest edition of *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* under its new editor, Wilson Smith, as well the latest award of the Old Edinburgh Club student prize. He thanked previous Secretary, Dr John Amooore, and welcomed Derrick Johnstone’s contribution as Secretary in taking up the role part-way through the year.

Peter reflected on the need to encourage imaginative ways of promoting interest in Edinburgh history, like the tee signs at Swanston nine-hole golf course, and invited local history or community organisations in Edinburgh to collaborate with the Club in running local historical walks. This would build on the success of those run with the Liberton Association in summer 2021.

Peter also expressed appreciation of the legacy received by the Club from Miss Jean Butchart, whose father was City Librarian between 1942 and 1953.

He concluded by commending the Annual Report, which will now be submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator. The Report can be downloaded from the Club’s website.

## SECRETARY’S REPORT

Honorary Secretary Derrick Johnstone reported on the success of the online events programme, including the Members’ Evening in December 2020. Lectures resume in the Augustine United Church in October 2021, with a live-streaming option for members to watch from home.

He drew attention to the online publication of the OEC Bibliography of Edinburgh History during the year, and progress made by the Edinburgh Southside Graveyard Project in restoring gravestones, despite the constraints imposed by COVID–19. Work has begun on ‘Edinburgh in Film’, a project intended to capitalise on the Moving Image Archive of the National Library.

Derrick thanked Graham Rule for restoring the Club website after a hacker attack during the year and explained that the Club is looking to improve its website.

He summarised how the Club is managed and encouraged members to consider standing for the OEC Council in the future.

## TREASURER’S REPORT

Unfortunately, our Treasurer Mike Harrison was unable to gain Wi-Fi access to give his report to the meeting. Secretary Derrick Johnstone stood in and made the following remarks on the Club’s accounts contained in the Annual Report:

- The Club’s finances are stable.
- While receipts are down on last year, this is attributable to the absence of income from Gift Aid. Last year, there was an accumulation in five years’ payments, and we have yet to claim for 2020–21.
- We have seen a fourfold increase in sales of *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*.
- One notable reduction in expenditure, COVID-related, was on room hire, from nearly £1,000 to £0.

Club policy is to maintain £15,000 in reserves, a level more than capable of meeting the printing and distribution costs of the *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*. At the year end, there were unrestricted funds of £23,416 – more than 50 per cent above this level.

The Club Constitution requires us to state our policy on subscriptions. We do not propose any change.

## RE-ELECTION OF OUR INDEPENDENT EXAMINER, STUART LOCKHART

Approved

## EDITOR’S REPORT

The *Book of the Old Edinburgh Club* Editor, Dr Wilson Smith, presented his first report having assumed full responsibility after the retirement of Editor Emeritus, Professor Bob Morris. Wilson reported that copies of Volume 16 of the New Series were issued

by post, a change from the traditional practice where members experience the frisson of receiving the latest Book at a Spring OEC lecture! Reception of this 2020 volume has been very positive, with favourable comments on the range and quality of contribution and the use of colour illustrations. He also conveyed his thanks to Bob and to members of the Book's Advisory Board.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

The following Council officer bearers were willing to continue in office and their positions were approved.

Honorary President:	Lord Cullen of Whitekirk
Honorary Vice President:	Professor Robert J. Morris
President:	Rev. W. Peter Graham
Vice President:	Dr Edward Duvall
Hon. Treasurer:	Mike Harrison
Hon. Secretary	
& Minutes Secretary:	Derrick Johnstone
Editor:	Dr Wilson Smith
Membership Secretary:	Jerry Ozaniec
Programme Secretary:	Prof Richard Rodger
Publicity Officer:	Mrs Pat Jones

The Council office bearers listed above were willing to continue in office and their membership was approved.

The President reminded the AGM of Council members elected in previous years to serve on Council for three years (date of election in brackets): Dr Diana Leat (2019), Dr Neil MacGillivray (2019), Ms Alison Macdonald (2019) and Mr Steven Robb (2018). He paid tribute to the contributions of Ms Asma Khan, elected to Council in 2019, who had resigned from Council in August 2020.

He called for further nominations to Council, but none were forthcoming at the meeting.

#### APPOINTMENT OF A SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

The President proposed that Steven Robb be appointed as a second Vice President, in recognition of his contribution to the OEC Council over the past three years since he first joined as a Council member. This was seconded by Jerry Ozaniec and approved by the meeting.

#### APPOINTMENT OF A SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

The President reminded the AGM that Council members other than the office-bearers are elected for a term of three years.

The following members were willing to continue in office (their date of election or co-option given in brackets):

Dr Diana Leat (September 2019)
Dr Neil MacGillivray (September 2019)
Ms Alison Macdonald (September 2019)
Dr John McAleese (November 2020)

Their continuation was approved by the meeting. No additional nominations were made before or at this point in the meeting.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

The President closed the meeting by thanking all members participating and looked forward to the resumption of in-person lectures at the Augustine United Church.

At the close of the formal business there was a presentation by Richard Hunter, former Edinburgh City Archivist, on 'Why Archives Matter'. He illustrated his case with some dramatic examples where the contents of public archives have made telling contributions to society. There needs to be greater public understanding of the value of archives and appreciation of how they contribute distinctively alongside museums and libraries. Currently local archives sit alongside these services in Scottish Government policy as a poor relation, with no national policy framework and associated funding

*Reports of Officer Bearers are available from the Secretary, Old Edinburgh Club.*

#### LECTURES 2020–21

All lectures for Session 2020–21 were given virtually via Zoom.

*18 November* 'Maps, History, and the Edge of the City of Edinburgh', Bruce Gittings

*16 December* Members Evening: 'Reminiscences: Photographs as Reminders of Edinburgh's History'. Presentations by Leonie Paterson: 'It's Not All Plants: The Photographic Collection in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Archive'; Toni Buchan: 'First Impressions: Arriving in Edinburgh'; and Gina Gainey: 'Photographing Edinburgh'

*13 January* '170 Years of Agitation: Henry Cockburn and the Cockburn Association', Terry Levinthal

*17 February* 'H.M. Treasury and the University of Edinburgh 1840–1900', Ian Levitt

*17 March* 'Who Runs Edinburgh?' David McCrone

*14 April* 'John Ritchie Findlay (1824–98): Architectural Patron and Benefactor', Clarisse Godard Desmarest

#### VISITS 2021

*29 July and 3 August* 'Aboon the Kirk': Walking tours of the Liberton area, with the assistance of Dr Margaret Collingwood and members of the Liberton Association