



# HERITAGE CENTRE BELLINGHAM

*Explore the Heritage  
of the Northern Borders*

## HERITAGE GROUP BELLINGHAM

### MINUTES of HERITAGE CENTRE BELLINGHAM AGM

Held at the Methodist Hall, 7pm Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Terry Bragg (Chairman) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming along in terrible weather. A hand-out was available to all attendees comprising:

- Agenda;
- Minutes of the AGM 2019;
- Chairman's Report;
- Financial Report for the year 2019.

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Trevor Suckling, Nicola Bell, Pat Batey, Jane Coulson, Catherine Connolly, Michael Armstrong and Ken Gaskin.

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Brian Anderson, Katrine Anderson, Eric Barber, Sally Bell, Christine Bragg, Terry Bragg, Tony Brotherton, Ben Dickinson-Green, Martin Dickinson-Green, Steve Gibbon, Mike Gibson, Steve Herod, Ken Irving, Ken Little, Clare Mackey, Maggie Mackey, Tim Moore, Stan Owen, Heather Price, Sheila Proudlock, Dick Shevlin, John Stevenson, Pat Stevenson, Margaret Telford, Wesley Turnbull (25 attendees).

#### **MINUTES OF AGM 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

The Chairman asked if there were any issues arising from the minutes and whether they could be formally adopted as a record of the meeting. There were no objections to the minutes so they were formally adopted. Mike Gibson proposed them they were seconded by Wesley Turnbull.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Welcome to everyone who is here tonight, and thank you for your on-going support of the Heritage Centre.

I am once again happy to report another exciting and successful year.

It is now four years since I attended a very packed hall where we were told that visitor numbers were down, as was income, we were short of volunteers, and the chairman was recommending that the centre be taken over by Woodhorn Museum at Ashington.

At that time so many of you stepped in to help and turn the Centre into a thriving concern once again. When the present committee took over the Centre was in the red by nearly £7,000, Our treasurer will give a detailed account of this year's income and expenditure, but I am delighted to report that this year end visitor numbers were up and we had achieved a healthy balance of nearly £18,000.

So, to this year. My thanks go to our hard-working committee and to the commitment, knowledge, experience and professionalism of all our volunteers. I hope that you all take the time to look in the visitor's book to see the comments and compliments in praise of the museum and the welcome they receive.

Before I start to talk about this year's activities and achievements, I must mention those friends and supporters who have left during the year. Most sad was the death of Annette Hynes. Annette had been a founder member and had continued to help and support until the end. Most recently as secretary up until February last year. She is very sadly missed.

Ken Gaskin, another founder member and committee member left the committee to concentrate on building a house but has continued to volunteer.

Sue Nichols and Tony Brotherton also stepped down from the committee

Sue, working with Stan Owen, initiated and organised so many new activities for children and families and developed strong links with our local schools resulting in two very successful 'take over' days. Sue's health has deteriorated leaving her unable to continue. We wish her all the best.

Tony who has now moved to pastures new, took the shop to the next level and also persuaded us to introduce the EPOS till, not loved by all, but now producing really useful information on visitors and their spending habits. Clare MacKay has now taken over responsibility and the shop's income continues to increase.

So on to our activities and achievements over the last year. This was a year of celebration. Founded in 1994, the Heritage Centre was 25 years old!

We of course set up a temporary display to mark the event and look back at the changes and developments during that time.

Paul Laidlaw the auctioneer and presenter on Antiques Road Trip and Bargain Hunt came along and set up in the far carriage for our very own Antiques Roadshow. Paul was so

impressed with the Centre that he has kindly offered to do another session this year.

We also had a wonderful celebratory lunch at Riverdale in October for friends, volunteers, supporters and major donors of display artefacts. John Grundy our guest speaker as always funny and interesting, but above all so complimentary about the Centre and its achievements.

Our year started well with the ever-popular vintage vehicle day, organised beautifully as always by Wesley Turnbull, he even managed to produce some lovely Spring sunshine.

During the year we have put on four wonderful temporary exhibitions:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> World War in the North Tyne and Redesdale;
- Bellingham Peace Celebrations;
- 100 years of the Forestry Commission;
- 25years of the Heritage Centre;

All thought provoking and relevant and expertly curated by Stan Owen.

As mentioned before, the Centre was taken over by Bellingham First School and organised chaos ruled with a great deal of activity and enthusiasm from the children and their families. My thanks to all the teachers and helpers and of course Stan, Sue and Nicola.

Local history is now going to form part of the new national curriculum, so plans are in place to host a training course for local teachers.

We are also continuing to develop activities and create interest in 'Residents Heritage Weekend'.

As well as the redesign of the shop we have invested in two new display units, one above reception displaying prices etc. and a larger one showing the attractions of the Centre.

We have improved our offers to Friends and volunteers. All will be rewarded for their loyalty with frequent newsletters and access to a friend's area on our website which contains interesting ancestry records developed by Rob Tindal and thousands of press cuttings collected and saved by Stan Owen. Best of all a 10% discount on items purchased including all books.

During the winter months we have been running training sessions every Wednesday afternoon to help volunteers learn and develop skills in their particular area of interest, this has included curatorial work which is going down very well and will help to deal with the many donations of artefacts we have received and continue to receive, also MODES training our Museum standard data base, First Aid, Photography, Welcome Host and Social Media.

I have quite rightly highlighted the tremendous work and commitment of all our volunteers, without you the Centre would not exist and the community would be the poorer for that, but I must now thank the hard work, dedication and professionalism of our trustees, who are continually striving to develop and improve the Centre for all to enjoy.

Each brings a special area of expertise and enthusiasm.

- Nichola Bell who first came to us to carry out an audit of our policies and practices and joined us with her wealth of knowledge on accreditation, museum practices and

working with schools.

- Stan Owen, who has been with the Heritage Centre from the start with the W. P. Collier collection but is now retired, curates our temporary exhibitions, continually improving and developing all our collections and taking on the mantle of engaging and developing our links with Schools and children and families.
- Katrine Anderson our treasurer who meticulously keeps our accounts and ensures that we are able to spend to improve but always within budget.
- Wesley Turnbull for his local knowledge and contacts and who ensures that the Centre is maintained in good condition and has the eye and expertise to make changes to layouts without fuss or major drama.
- Clare MacKay who has taken over the management of the shop.
- Steve Gibbon who came to us with an interest in heritage and expertise in IT and who has taken on so much more, bringing ideas for improvements and delivering them and taking our presentation of the Centre to the wider world into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Steve has also taken on the role of secretary this year and of Chairman designate.

We lost two trustees from our committee last year, so we are looking for more people to join the committee to cover membership records, publicity, to co-ordinate our education work, and we are also in need of a secretary. I know we have many good people here so if you would like to join us please come forward. We are a friendly bunch and supportive always.

Finally, it has been a great honour to be your chairman for the last four years, but it is now time for me to stand down and let someone else take the Centre forward.

I know I am a man from Essex, but I love the Heritage Centre, I have met so many good people through the Centre and through this fabulous community.

Although I am standing down as Chairman, I will continue to be a trustee on the committee if re-elected, I just won't have quite so much responsibility, which although an honour can sometimes be a burden and I am beginning to feel my age.

I hope you will continue to support your new chairman who comes with fresh enthusiasm and ideas for ensuring the Heritage Centre goes from strength to strength.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT AND RECEIPT AND APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Katrine Anderson (Treasurer) presented the financial report for 2019. Copies of the report were available to attendees. The Chairman was pleased with a healthy bank balance and hoped for further improvement this year with the changes in the shop. The accounts were accepted by the AGM – proposed by Wesley Turnbull and seconded by Sally Bell.

#### **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

At this stage of the meeting all of the committee members stood down. The following people were nominated and accepted by the meeting *en bloc*, there being no competition for officer posts.

- Steve Gibbon (Chairman and Secretary), Officer, Trustee
- Wesley Turnbull (Vice Chairman), Trustee
- Katrine Anderson, Officer, Treasurer
- Terry Bragg, Trustee
- Stan Owen, Trustee
- Clare Mackey, Committee Member

- Nicola Bell, Committee Member in an advisory role
- **CONSIDER ANY OTHER MOTIONS**
- No other motions were raised prior to the meeting deadline.

#### **THIS WAS THE END OF THE FORMAL PART OF THE AGM**

#### **INFORMAL PART OF THE EVENING**

#### **PLANS FOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS 2020**

Stan Owen informed the meeting about the planned temporary exhibitions for 2020 which were:

1. 150th anniversary of the Postcard (1st October 1870)
2. 130th anniversary of birth of Roderick (Roddy) Thompson (28th September 1890)
3. 75th anniversary of the ending of World War 2
4. Release of a book on Roderick (Roddy) Thompson by Stan Owen

#### **THANKS TO THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN**

The new Chairman, Steve Gibbon, made a short speech thanking the outgoing Chairman Terry Bragg for his hard work over many years and his guidance to the rest of the committee including his personal support for Steve himself.

A presentation of gifts was made by Stan Owen and Steve Gibbon to Terry and Christine Bragg as thanks for all the hard work from both of them which was much appreciated by everyone present.

#### **NEW CHAIRMAN'S PRESENTATION**

The new Chairman gave a presentation on the Centre, aspects of its operations, including visitor numbers, admissions and shop finances. He then talked about the future of the Centre in terms of evolution from the excellent position we were currently in. This was followed by a question and answer session for the attendees.

The new Chairman ended the meeting at 20:45

Thank you.

END