



EXETER CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

From the Chairman:

Current Position of the Society:

I am delighted to bring you all a more cheerful message than the Winter newsletter conveyed: Exeter Civic Society survives at least to the AGM next autumn.

This is thanks to the goodwill of two volunteers, whose readiness to take on essential offices has ensured that we fully meet the requirements of our charitable status. **Pamela Coleman** and **Julian Nowill** are now respectively our Secretary and Treasurer, having been unanimously approved at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 29 March last. We are also grateful to **Celia King** for undertaking to be Minuting Secretary.

We can't be complacent, however. We need to work towards a regularly refreshed committee system whose members serve for an agreed maximum of, say, 3 years.

We need plenty of volunteers for specific roles. In short, we need plenty of active members. Don't hesitate to step forward, or recommend others, for the exciting ideas that are listed below: we need to exert ourselves.

Report on the Extraordinary General Meeting:

It was heartening to receive replies in advance from about half of our membership, almost all hoping that the Society would remain viable. I was touched to learn the strength of goodwill from our many members who can no longer take an active part in our plans but wish that they could. It was not possible to acknowledge individually the many useful comments and suggestions that came in, but these, together with a fair number of frank comments on perceived weaknesses, will not be forgotten.

The meeting itself was well attended and enjoyably positive. The relief of having volunteers for the key offices meant that we could move swiftly on to future plans. We were reminded that **2011 marks the 50th anniversary of the**

Society's foundation, the first to be formed outside London. **We must celebrate this.**

We then heard how Torbay Civic Society manages to be so successful. Its Chairman, Ian Handford, was inspirational: the emphasis must be on fun, and to that end monthly coffee mornings are held at a hotel (attendance is regularly 70+), dinners are held regularly with interesting speakers (again, take-up is good), coach trips are arranged once or twice a year. In addition to putting up plaques, they produce illustrated leaflets about past celebrities with a Torbay connection, and appear to be successful in covering costs through sponsorship by local businesses. They also work hard to catch the interest of the local media. Ian generously authorised us to borrow as many of these ideas as we wish; further suggestions from the floor concluded the meeting.

What next?

As explained in the Winter newsletter, we need plenty of sub-committees willing to take on specific roles without the obligation to attend formal committee meetings.

The following are priority areas of interest: please notify the Secretary or me as soon as possible if you are interested in joining a working party to explore them further.

1) 50th anniversary celebrations

possibly combining with Tuckers Hall, so some dual members could be useful

2) regular coffee mornings

these must be an excellent way of drawing in potential members

3) publicity

in its widest sense

I do emphasise that the aim is to share any workload involved. The emphasis must be on fun for everyone, not just for the passive beneficiaries.

There are plenty of other ideas in the pipeline and if you are keen to start on them now, do let me know.

In conclusion:

Please keep the interests of the Society in mind in your busy lives. Encourage non-members to look at the website and download an application form. Get together with members to devise further ways of generating and maintaining interest. And please consider being the next Chairman: I'm not going to make an exception of myself when it comes to refreshing the committee!

Felicity Murdin

