



Wigan Local History & Heritage Society

Minutes of a Members Meeting on Monday 16th January 2023 via Zoom at 7:00pm

1. Number of Members present: 17
Apologies for absence. Rita Fell, Marie Garner, David Fox

2. Minutes of previous meeting November 2022.

Proposed by Karen Garner and seconded by Paul Kenyon.
Members then approved the minutes unanimously,

3. Matters Arising: Clare

Action Points:

1. Nov21 AP5: completed.

Agreed the Galleries Assets Consultation would now go forward as a project to Save the Market Hall Clock. See 5 below.

2. July AP1: Arrange a further visit to St Wilfred's Church - Andy to arrange for February

3. August AP1: Raise the profile of history and heritage in Wigan Town Centre - On hold until after the Consultation meeting on a proposed Wigan Heritage and Arts Trust at the Old Courts 26/01/23

4. October AP1 Research Market Hall Clock - completed the clock is the original Victorian Clock.

23/11/22 3 members visited Market Hall and were allowed to photograph mechanisms behind the clock. A member, Peter spoke with a Galleries project manager, who was also there taking pics of the canopy removal. He was shown the clock and asked if he knew of its relevance, he said he was unaware of it, but gave verbal assurances that it would be recovered and saved.

Following further research it is concluded that it is the original indoor market Victorian clock which was saved in the 1980s and the old great mechanisms converted and modified to a low voltage system. The original key also appears to be there.

Members were also informed of a collection of old photographs etc which may not make it on the assets register unless brought to the attention of Wigan Council.

It is felt that the officers dealing with the demolition works seem to be oblivious to the importance of the clock as a heritage asset.



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Research has uncovered newspaper reports dating back to 1882 which may help, also information about the Wigan clock maker Thomas Milner.

It is important to ensure the clock is saved.

This in turn will need members to form a project group to take the matter forward. Karen and Neil volunteered to join the project group.

Jan AP1: set up project group to save the Market Hall Clock - KG, NL, DW, CK, AL

5. Oct AP3: order screen and trolley - CK - ongoing

6. Oct. AP4: create a calendar of trips and events - events team - ongoing.

4. Treasurer update - Neil L

Neil gave a brief overview of the accounts. Looking healthy but Christmas Party expenses still need to be deducted.

5. Working Group reports:

Cultural Consortium - Neil:

Clare agreed to continue to represent WLHHS for a further year: this will bring in an annual consultation fee of £200 to WLHHS.

Archives and Training - Andy:

A WhatsApp group for members who volunteered to join the Archives Research Team will be set up in early February and projects allocated.

An outline of the new exhibition in the Museum of Wigan Life was given. Some members have been invited along to the official opening.

KS HAZ research group - Jan:

A productive meeting had taken place on Thursday when plans were agreed on the best way to raise the profile of the project. It has been agreed to change the name to the King Street Story, take part in the 'Streets Apart' festival in July and in Heritage Open Days in September.

It is worrying that the HAZ Board meeting had been cancelled yet again on the day before it should have been held.

6. Websites and Social Media Reports:

Peter - Business as usual, continuing well.

Clare - no specific report, but all SM accounts ticking over nicely.



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A request for help with running the SM platforms was made.

7. At Risk Building of the Month - Peter F:

A confidential report was given on the At Risk Chapels at Westwood Cemetery. Concerns were expressed about the future of the whole row of early Victorian Town Houses, including the Tudor pub, by the bus station in Wigan Town Centre.

8. Wigan Buildings - Andy:

Tickling over, nothing specific to report.

Planning a Spring recruitment campaign for new volunteers.

The site is used by Wigan Archives for information.

1200 buildings on the site.

9. Trips, visits, events - events team:

Circumstances have prevented the events team from meeting and it is hoped this can be resolved asap.

10. Member Research updates - open:

Member John Richardson asked for help with his research into Wigan Surnames. Some suggestions were put forward, 'single name studies' The History of Wigan by Sinclair. Volumes 1 and 2 available on WLHHS website. Member Bill Woodcock offered to help with the research project. The Secretary will share John's email address with members.

Member Will Sharp had to leave the meeting before this item was discussed, he is hoping to attend the Feb presentation in Wigan where he will give an update.

Member Jim Meehan shared a PowerPoint presentation showing a plaque in St Michael's Church in Swinley dedicated to the White family, which was a very interesting family. It has been discovered through Will and Pat's research that the family had been present on King Street for many decades, not only as their place of residence but also as a medical practice for 40-50 years. David (the father) helped to set up the dispensary. Family moved to 139 Wigan Lane when the Infirmary opened, he was a specialist in dermatology and industrial disease. Mentor for young artists, donated paintings to Wigan Library.

Eleanor in the Local Studies Store has been contacted to look for any of these paintings. Two Masonic medals have been found.



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An interesting family that straddles two projects: Springfield House and 139 next door. Ian Darlington Director of Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra has asked for information about this.

Leading light for treatment of a skin condition known as Bakers Itch.

Member Jan reported on her current research.

It was reported that there is lots of information to be found on the Wigan Buildings website.

A discussion took place about the Blue Plaque award system in Wigan.

11. Any other Business

1. David Fox has informed the group that two forthcoming presentations will fall on Bank Holidays: Easter Monday April 10th, and the Kings Coronation weekend Monday May 8th.

Proposed the presentations should be moved to the third Monday of the month on those occasions. This will impact on Jim's planned April talk on The Bridgewater Canal, and the May presentation is still to be confirmed.

The 2023 calendar for presentations is currently showing availability for May, June, September, November.

A discussion took place about bookings and names were recommended as possible speakers:

Alan Davies, Sean Jinks, Joseph O'Neil, Neil Davies.

Up until now, the presentations have all been kindly done without a charge, thereby allowing for talks to be free of charge to all members and guests. If we do have to go down the route of paid speakers the Constitution allows for a small entry charge to cover the speaker costs. This will go on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

2. The Chair informed the meeting that he'd had only 5 responses to his request for members thoughts on 'why is Wigans history and heritage important to you?'

He agreed to extend the time period to gather responses from more members.

The Secretary offered to create a Google Form to make it easier for members to respond and it will also help to record the data in the form of an excel sheet.

3. Andy informed the meeting that a copy of a special award from the Typographical Society of Wigan to Sam Woods MP for Ince has been uncovered.

Andy and Jim to help with research.

It is intended to present this to his family at a date to be agreed.

12. Date and time of next meeting:

Presentation: Monday 13th February, at Real Crafty, 7pm. The Price of Coal by Ken Scally.



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Members Monthly Meeting: Monday 20th February, at 7pm via Zoom.