



## Wigan Local History & Heritage Society

Minutes of the Members Meeting Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 via Zoom at 7:00pm

1. Apologies for absence: PK (first 30 mins) IP, JB, CA, E and AC, DW, JT, SR
  
2. Minutes of previous meeting June 2020 were agreed to be an accurate account of the meeting.  
Proposed NL  
Seconded by RF
  
3. Matters Arising:  
Missing Gidlow sister paintings and stained glass window – still no progress on search for a these. A social media post drew a lot of attention to the search and staff working at the hospital are looking for it amongst the stained glass windows on site. There is a consensus that it could be at the back of the discharge lounge which is currently inaccessible. The search is ongoing.
  
4. Projects update:  
PF gave an update on the projects:
  - Plantation Gates Wigan Lane: This is an on-going project to halt the deterioration of the Gate & Lodges. In 2016 Wigan Building Preservation Trust (BPT) commissioned a Condition report. Currently the restoration of the building is included in a Wigan Council (Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles) application for Heritage Lottery Funding. A decision was due to be received in March 2020, but due to the pandemic this is delayed.
  
  - The Common Seal Stonework: The project aim is to repair and relocate the stonework, recovered, from the old Town Hall, King St, to a prominent position within the Town Centre. The group is working with Wigan Council to locate the stonework in a prominent location within the town. It has been suggested that it should be relocated at the Wigan Pier complex, although this has been put on hold for the time being, due to the pandemic.
  
  - The Gidlow Sisters: Discovering and locating oil paintings of Margaret Eleanor and Amelia Gidlow originally displayed in the Board Room of Wigan Infirmary. There is also a stained glass window dedicated to the sisters. Despite enquiries



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made both to Wigan Archives and The Trustees at Wigan Infirmary there is still no trace of the missing paintings. See Item 3: Matters Arising, regarding progress made on locating the missing stained glass window. Member R S will ask his wife who works at the infirmary to check for the stained glass window in the building.

- WLHHS Website: The resources section makes it an ideal site for signposting people for personal research. The articles and news section is being added to regularly. It was visited 496 times last week from 19 visitor countries. A request was made for contributions to the section on Wigan at War. JM, RS and RF offered to contribute to this. Save Winstanley Hall material has been added including an excellent 120 page document by a conservation group.
- WBPT website: work has started and significant progress made on detailing some of the 700 buildings on the Council BLINT list with a connection to Historic England. It will make an ideal platform to integrate into the Council Historic Strategy. Haigh Foundry has been upgraded to a building at risk. Volunteers are needed to photograph buildings of local interest.

### 5. King Street Cultural Consortia:

A discussion took place outlining this:

It's purpose and role is to oversee the design and delivery of a new 3 year cultural programme on King Street which will be rooted in the stories of the present, past and future users of King Street and its surrounding communities.

The cultural Consortium will consist of a lead – Old Courts and 8 core members.

WLHHS and WBPT have been invited to take part in the King Street project.

NL attended a first introductory meeting via Zoom, when the detail of the project was introduced, the role of the group was explained and key pieces of work outlined.

WLHHS has since been invited to join the group. NL will represent WBPT.

A second meeting took place last week and the following items were discussed:

#### PRESENT, PAST, FUTURE

- The current culture of King Street: Who uses the street in 2020? What experiences do they have?
- What's changed? How are the experiences of the public on King Street similar to those of the past; from living memory and from further back in history? How are they different?



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- Who's missing? Who doesn't use the street in 2020? Why? What would change that?

### IMAGINING ACTIVITY

- What comes to mind when we talk about creating a 'cultural programme' on King Street. What does that experience look and feel like to you?

Further meetings are to take place to prepare for a bid to Heritage England.

#### 6. Wigan Draft Historic Environment Strategy:

WLHHS attended the launch presentation last week by invitation from Richard MacDonald. They have since reviewed the document and identified a number of areas in which it is felt that the Society and WBPT can assist with.

The members discussed the document at length and it was agreed that the Secretary should contact Richard MacDonald at Wigan Council to request a meeting to look at how the Society can assist with this.

Members are invited to complete the survey.

The King St Master Plan was also discussed and some of the exciting changes being proposed: The demolition of some infill buildings to create a King St Square which will open up College Ave and link with Library Street, it will also overlook the side of the Royal Court Theatre. There will be street art of various forms, shop fronts and the streetscape will be improved and a move away from just a night time economy is being planned with a vibrant mix of uses to attract people during the day and evening.

The overall aim being:

To secure a sustainable future for the historic fabric of King street and use its strong heritage to underpin a sense of place and cultural identity.

AP1 The Secretary will write to the council and suggest a meeting.

#### 7. Any Other Business:

- Future presentations:

November: Derek Winstanley – Gerrard Winstanley and the influence of his family and Wigan.

December: Christmas Zoom Quiz and party



## **Wigan Local History & Heritage Society**

January: Andy Lomax – Nathaniel Eckersley

February: Ron Hunt – Wigan Little Theatre

We need further volunteers to present their research please.

Vacancies for: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

Please contact the secretary to book one of the vacant slots.

All most welcome.