



Wigan Local History & Heritage Society

Minutes of the Members Meeting held on Monday 17th January 2022 via Zoom at 7:00pm

1. Number of Members present and Apologies for absence.

19 members were present and apologies were received from: Paul Kenyon, Ian Parker, Rob Lawson (Haigh Parish Council meeting) Lesley Price, Sheila Ramsdale, Julie Taylor, Bob Sanders

2. Minutes of previous meeting December 2021.

These were unanimously agreed as an accurate account of the meeting.

Proposed by Karen Garner

Seconded by Richard Simpson.

3. Matters Arising:

Action Points:

2 outstanding from November, both completed:

November AP2. Draw up a draft list for suitable video equipment

List of equipment drawn up totalling £367. Asked to revise up to the awarded total of £500 to include a GoPro camera for guided walks etc. -Christian F.

Completed: Christian has done this on behalf of the Society and has circulated a revised list to Jim, Neil and Bob for their approval. He has also kindly offered to purchase the items on behalf of the Society, to train members in how to use it and to continue to edit the recordings.

Proposal to accept the revised list: Jim Meehan

Seconded Richard Simpson

Unanimously agreed.

November AP5. Draft a letter to be submitted to Wigan Council requesting that

WLHHS be actively involved in the process regarding the disposal and re-siting of the heritage assets from the Galleries complex - Derek W Completed.

To be sent to Conservation Officer Ian Rowan, cc to Chief Exec, circulated to members. Clare K Completed.

8 Action Points from December: All completed except Dec AP8

Dec AP1. Covered in Agenda item 4 Eckersley Mill - Andy L Completed.

Dec AP2. Facilitate cash payment arrangements for payment of member subscriptions Neil L - Completed.

Dec AP3. Secretary renew annual subscriptions to LFLH 2022-23 and to take out an annual subscription with BALH for 2022-23- Completed

Dec AP4. Email AB to offer info on WB website for a data base on Local Listings in Wigan - Peter F. Completed

Dec AP5. Place on future agendas an item for At Risk Building of Month - secretary - Completed.

Dec AP6. Carry out a Guided Local History Walk of KSHAZ Area with commissioned project artists. JM, NL, CK completed.

Dec AP7. Art work to commemorate Wigan Cotton Workers - agenda item 7 - DW



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Completed.

Dec AP8. Draw up list of heritage assets which may be contained in the workshops and stables up for auction by Canal and Rivers Trust Neil L - ongoing carry forward.

4. Eckersley Mill. - Andy Lomax

Good News: Previous owners Maryland have sold the site to a local Wigan Firm - Heaton Group. The new owners have described the purchase as 'a jewel in their crown'
Mills at the North - Zoom meeting 11am 18th January between Anthony and Andy
Andy will contribute to an article on Eckersley Mill for Wigan Today

JAN. AP1 Contact Heaton's for more information - Richard S

5. Treasurer update and subscriptions

£200 paid by Cultural Consortium for the attendance at meetings of WLHHS representative is still outstanding.

Following payment by members for annual subscriptions the bank account is in credit to almost £1,200. However, £500 of this is ring fenced for payment of recording equipment and camera.

JAN AP2. Draw up list of assets - where they are kept, value:

Scanner, laptop, projector, voice enhancer, recording equipment, camera - Neil L

6. At Risk Building of the Month

Peter presented information on the Blundell Memorial, Alexandra Park which is in the form of an obelisk in honour of Colonel Blundell.

It's condition is very poor and badly maintained- drink fountain broken, rose gardens removed. Further information is available on Wigan Buildings website

It was agreed to have a Buildings At Risk feature on WLHHS Facebook page to inform the Wigan Community: - Clare K

FB Post - At Risk Building of the Month;

Wigan has so many fine historic, heritage buildings. Most of the time, people walk by on their day to day business and are unaware of the history attached to these.

Over the years property and buildings have not been maintained and sadly, many are now in the category 'At Risk'

Over in Alexander Park in Newtown there is an obelisk, a memorial to Blundell, but who was he and why was this memorial in his honour erected?

Blundell Memorial

Alexandra Park, Warrington Road, Wigan
By John Millson of Manchester.



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Condition: At Risk:

Very poor and badly neglected. Part of pedestal broken and removed, portrait medallion missing, two drinking fountains with bronze lion heads now broken.

In 1907 it was erected at a cost of £460 by public subscription to the memory of Colonel Henry Blundell- Hollinshead-Blundell, MP for Ince.

The obelisk was unveiled by Simon Brown, cotton spinner, and Chairman of the Ince Conservative Association

Who was Blundell?

Born in 1831 and educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford.

In 1865 married Beatrice Byng, daughter of Vice Admiral Byng. On her death in 1884 Henry commissioned the building of Highfield St. Matthew's Church in memory of Beatrice. The consecration of the whole church was carried out on 22nd July, 1910 by the second Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Chevasse.

The Blundell family had extensive coal mining interests in the Highfield area and surrounding districts.

On the local History & Heritage website, there is an excellent history of Highfield including the history of Highfield and Winstanley including the Blundell family, the coal mining community and the history of St. Matthew's Church.

https://static.s123-cdn-static-d.com/uploads/3625811/normal_5eeda1599c30a.pdf

Hollinshead-Blundell had a distinguished military career, joining the Rifle Brigade as an Ensign in 1865. He saw service in the Crimean War and as a Colonel served with the 1884/5 Nile Expedition for the Relief of General Gordon at Khartoum.

He was also admitted to the Military Division of the Order of the Bath in 1887 and retired in 1889.

He served two spells as MP for Ince 1885-1892 and 1895-1906, he was defeated by Stephen Walsh who would gain notoriety for his campaign on behalf of the Pit Brow Lassies.

Henry Blundell-Hollinshead-Blundell died on 28th September 1906 and was buried in the churchyard of St. Cuthbert's at Halsall.

We are planning to have a regular spotlight on Heritage At Risk post.

If there is a particular building or monument you'd like us to feature, please get in touch.

Let's all help to promote our towns rich history and heritage and try to save any at risk.

#wiganlocalhistory

#localhistory

#buildingsatrisk

JAN AP3. Agenda Item each month At Risk Building of the Month - Peter F

JAN AP4. FB post each month, At Risk Building of the Month - Clare K

7. Art Work - A Tribute to the Wigan Cotton Workers - DW

Derek shared his screen to show his art tribute to the cotton workers of Wigan.

It is a triptic piece made from a variety of materials and woods depicting where the cotton

came from, the mills in Wigan and the final piece depicts the desolation of the dilapidated



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mills.

Derek will transport it to Wigan when he visits in Summer.

A discussion took place regarding where it will be best displayed.

Neil Harris will be contacted for a decision.

JAN. AP5 Email Neil Harris with photographs and details of materials and dimensions - Neil L

8. Working Group Reports:

Projects, Archives and Training:

Peter reported that the training at Archives has now ended.

A discussion took place around cataloguing and the storage of heritage assets.

JAN AP6. Contact Louise A to arrange a visit - Jim M, Andy L

Peter gave an update on WLHHS website additions:

An article on the history of the Rushton Building - 70 shops at one time.

Royal Ordnance factory

Wigan Workhouse and the Poor Law Union.

Thomas Skelton - the Muncaster Fool - located one of his paintings.

Reports on Winstanley Hall.- Kitchen wall garden, a study on the sale of the Hall.

1970 audio recording of pit brow girls - Peter expressed thanks to David and Christian Fox for helping to enhance the quality.

The website continues to have a large global audience. There has been over 3.5K visits per month from all over the world.

He gave an update on the Wigan Buildings website - The original BLINT list data has now been uploaded. There are 5 regular volunteers but still looking for more volunteers to help with photographs and research of the buildings in conservation areas.

Cultural Consortium

Neil reported on arrangements for guided walk for commissioned artists. No meetings over Christmas break.

KS HAZ The Street That Was:

Guided history walks for artists to take place 18th January. A meeting to Archives is to be arranged for the research group by Phil Machin.

Alex Miller the archivist has announced his resignation following his success in applying for a promoted post at Lancashire Archives, he will be missed at Wigan.

Bob S has drawn up a suggested list of equipment to replace Dropbox as a repository for research work. It will be paid for from the KS HAZ budget.



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9. Social Media Reports - Clare

A discussion took place around having a members only part of the website to give a greater incentive to becoming a member.

The secretary felt that priority viewing of presentations should be given to online members and those unable to attend presentation meetings at Real Crafty and would like to investigate the possibility of this.

JAN. AP7 investigate the feasibility of a members only area on the website - Peter F

WLHHS Messenger Group

FB Messenger is only available to people with a FB account and it is no longer possible to use mobile numbers to send out invitations to new members wishing to join the group unless the secretary makes them a 'friend' on FB or if their FB profile is easily identifiable which isn't the case.

To help solve the problem a WLHHS Signal Messenger group has been opened, it is a newer technology and is easier to send out invitations to new members.

It simply involves downloading a Signal App and then clicking on an invitation link sent out by the secretary. The process has been started and a group set up with 17 members who have joined or been switched across from the original group.

This group will eventually be deleted as more members switch over.

10. Any other Business

Derek W shared his screen to show members a hand painted on mahogany coat of arms depicting the Ancient and Loyal motto. He outlined the history behind the coat of arms which belonged to his great uncle William Massey of the Massey Brothers in Wigan.

He shared some fascinating old photographs of a family wedding.

He offered, on behalf of WLHHS to write up the history of the coat of arms to commemorate the centenary history in April 2022.

He plans to donate it to the Pemberton Old Band because it has strong connections with his granddad who played cornet for the band when they won a championship in 1903.

JAN. AP8. Write an article about the Ancient and Loyal Coat of Arms- DW

11. Date and time of next meeting:

1. Presentation Meeting: February 14th 7pm at Real Crafty - The Most Calamitous of Times - Wigan during the Civil War Period by Jim Meehan.

2. Members Meeting: Monday February 21st at 7pm via Zoom