

THE CONWAY CLUB 99th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE MARRIOTT HOTEL
WALTHAM ABBEY AT 1500 hrs. ON SATURDAY 9th OCTOBER 2010

Present:	Tom Mason	President
	John McCaughrean	Vice-President
	Alfie Windsor	Vice-President
	Chris B Smith	Hon. Treasurer
	Ian Minchin	Hon. Secretary

and 45 other Members.

The President welcomed all members to the meeting and ensured that all present had received copies of the Agenda and accompanying papers.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Conrad Blakey; Mike Reeves; Haydn Lockwood; Graham Greenfield; Clive Plummer; Alan Burns; Dennis Hatfield; David Moore.

2. MINUTES OF THE 98th AGM HELD AT LIVERPOOL ON 7th AUGUST 2009

The minutes having been circulated to those present, the President asked if they could be signed as a true record of the meeting. This was proposed by Peter Granger, seconded by Brian McAree and duly adopted.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) Amendment to Motion re: Membership Status of Conway Merchant Navy Trust Grant recipients.

For the benefit of all, the President stated that a proposal had been put to the 2009 AGM which read: 'it is proposed that all recipients of Conway Merchant Navy Trust Grants, who have completed their training leading to certification, become eligible for Associate Membership of the Conway Club'.

That proposal was passed and went on the record.

Later in the meeting under 'any other business' Peter Granger proposed and Brian McAree seconded, an amendment to that proposal which read 'should become Full Members of the Conway Club'. A show of hands, as the minutes record, gave 71 for and 37 against.

However, it was not considered as a formal amendment as it did not have the benefit of 2 months notice to the Hon Sec, required in Club Rule No. 23 for any proposal necessitating a rule change. Having now fulfilled that requirement, the President explained the AGM had before it that amendment to change the wording from 'Affiliate Membership' to 'Full Membership'.

The President also explained that at the 2009 AGM, the President had confirmed the committee would discuss this at their next meeting. The Committee had duly done this and agreed, by a formal vote, not to support the motion,

As the motion had already been proposed and seconded formally, at the 2009 AGM, it now needed to be put to the vote.

The President asked if any clarification was required and the queries which followed were duly answered.

When asked how many people would be affected by this decision, it was confirmed that presently it was not more than 12.

It was also confirmed that all members, full and affiliate, pay the same subscription. In clarification, the President then repeated the amendment before calling for a vote to be taken

The votes were counted and it was confirmed that there were 16 in favour and 25 against. Therefore the proposal was not carried and the original Proposal remained its pre-meeting wording of "Affiliate Membership".

There were no other Matters Arising.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to welcome you all to Waltham Abbey on the occasion of this AGM and the Dinner to celebrate the Club's Centenary. This is indeed a milestone to and I know our Dinner this evening will do the event justice.

I was honoured to take on the role as your President in January this year and after 9 months I'm pleased to report I'm settling in and enjoying the task of serving the Club.

I'm fortunate to be working with an able committee and experienced Officers and I thank them for their help and council. Their support has been invaluable during this early period of my Presidency.

I also wish to thank two individual members of the committee who are not standing for re election this year.

Firstly, John Sheldrake who has been a Committee member for 36 years. John has also served as President of the Club and now intends to focus on his role as Chairman of the Conway Trust. Thank you John for a lifetime's service to the Conway Club.

Also, David Hilton, who, for a number of years, has operated our very popular shop and worked hard to bring us all a superior retail experience! He has also served as a valued committee member. David will continue his work as organist at the Conway Chapel.

Your committee has met twice this year and on both occasions has dealt with a full agenda.

Foremost in our minds has been the future financial strength of the club. The decline of investment income, as a result of the global financial crisis, has led us to consider a number of new ways of increasing revenue to ensure adequate support for the clubs traditional activities along with the production and distribution of the Cadet magazine.

The Presidents' Appeal, launched early this year in the Cadet magazine, was your committee's first response to the changing financial situation we face. The member's response was overwhelmingly generous and I wish to add my personal thanks, to those of your committee, to all who contributed so wholeheartedly. The response included support from the Club's branches as well as individuals.

You will hear much more on this subject from our Hon treasurer, Chris Smith and in particular our future plans to ensure the financial viability of the club in his report

During the year I've had the pleasure of meeting members at a number of very enjoyable social functions.

The Solent Branch Spring Weekend started the year off well and it continued to this high standard with the excellent Conway Cruising Club Rally in Dartmouth, the South West Branch Kelly College Luncheon the London Barbeque, which this year was held onboard "Wellington". More recently the North West branch Ladies Lunch at Menai Bridge provided an enjoyable occasion to share with members.

Ann and I are also looking forward to attending the forthcoming re union in Tasmania and hope to be able to make the Conway Worcester Pangbourne event in Singapore towards the end of May next year.

I believe these regional social events and international re unions are the life blood of the club and will ensure it's strength and continuity in the future years.

I've also had the pleasure of attending a number of services at the Conway Chapel, including the most moving Memorial Service, held annually, to commemorate those Conways who have crossed the bar in the last 12 months. I recommend all Conways to make regular visits to the Priory in Birkenhead. The Friends of Conway do excellent work in preserving our heritage and maintaining most carefully the beautiful Conway Chapel.

I am also pleased to report to the AGM, the election of an Associate Member, Mr J Wyn Williams, who was trained as a steward with the catering staff at Plas Newydd.

I am also delighted to report the election of Canon Bob Evans M.B.E. as an Honorary Conway. Bob will be well known to those who attended the 150th celebrations in Liverpool for his address to Conways in the Cathedral.

In summary, I look forward to helping ensure the club continues it's original mission of 100 years ago, to foster fraternal relations amongst Old Conways and maintain contact between them, where ever they may be.

5. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT

Ladies and Gentlemen, having dealt with the 2009 accounts, the committee feels it is appropriate that I to report to you on the current financial position and to give you an account of what has been happening this year.

First of all, our financial position is stable and we have a balance of about £6,000 in the current account with all known liabilities, including the latest issue of the "Cadet" and tonight's dinner paid. Unless there are any unforeseen or unbudgeted expenses, I would hope we will end the year with a positive cash balance of around £5,500.

Our investments had a market value of £24,641 as of October 6th so in total we have current assets of just over £30,000 which I am afraid is a decrease of £5,600 or 15% over the figures you have just examined for the end of 2009 and reflects the loss we made in 2009. To compare like with like the bottom line figures of total Net assets were £44,858 at the end of 2009 and will be approximately £43,700.

Our vastly improved cash flow position is almost entirely down to the President's appeal which to date has raised just over £14,000. This enabled us to clear accounts which were outstanding from 2009 and further fund 2 issues of the "Cadet" in 2010.

At the committee meeting held in February when I reported the difficult cash flow position, approval was given to raise capital by selling some of our investments, which was duly done in March to a value of approximately £9,500. Due to the tremendous response to the President's appeal, it became evident that we would not need the majority of the cash raised from selling shares and we therefore re-invested £8,600 in better performing stock during June of this year. However, I have to report that during this year two companies in which we hold shares have gone into liquidation and have no market value which partly reflects the current reduction of approximately £6,000 in the value of our investments.

We have also undertaken the exercise of establishing all our shares in a nominee account with our appointed stockbrokers, Fiske & Co. This has been an amazingly complicated and bureaucratic task and I would like to record my thanks to our account executive at Fiske for his continued guidance and patience.

All expenses are being tightly controlled and kept to an absolute minimum but everyone must realise that we need to continually raise funds in order to continue publication of the "Cadet" twice a year. The committee is currently looking at ways in which we can possibly reduce the cost, particularly that of distribution which for the last issue was £1,250. Everyone will agree that the "Cadet" is a vital communication tool and must be continued despite the cost of £8,000 per year and for this reason we have to look at future funding.

In simple terms, our average income from all sources (investments, subscriptions, donations and fund raising) is £5,000 and the average annual cost of running the Club is around £10,000 (Cadet publication and distribution plus other costs) so we need to fund the balance of £5,000 somehow. We could, of course, simply use our assets to continue but that will last for something like 6 years and then what do we do? Your committee is considering various methods including a subscription for the "Cadet", e-mail or web based circulation and bulk forwarding to overseas groups for local postage but are of the opinion that the first two risk disenfranchising many members and the latter is unlikely to provide any great savings.

Obviously another "Appeal" is a non-starter and we have decided to try and raise a regular income with the "100" club concept. I am sure the concept is self explanatory with everyone joining being given an opportunity of recouping their investment. Although we will be discussing this initiative later in the Agenda, I urge you join in the fun and help the Club prosper into the future.

6. RULE CHANGE (RULE 20)

Rule 20 states that 'Neither the CONWAY CLUB MEMBERSHIP LIST or any internet information concerning individual members shall be used for the circulation of correspondence, electronic or otherwise, relating to the promotion or advertising of business or commercial ventures. They shall not be made available to other persons or organisations for these or any other purpose. The only exceptions to this rule shall relate to authorised advertisements in 'THE CADET'.

The President explained that the words "or any other purpose" were unduly restrictive. It was therefore proposed that after "organisations", the rule should be amended to read "for this purpose"

The last sentence should also be deleted in its entirety.

This Rule Change was proposed by Robert Fairbairn, seconded by Phil Van-Bergen, and was passed unanimously

The President asked John McCaughrean to update the Club Rules accordingly

7. 2011 DINNER ARRANGEMENTS

The President confirmed that arrangements were well under way for the 2011 AGM and Annual Dinner to be held on Saturday 8th October at the St. David's Hotel, St. David's Park, Ewloe, Nr Chester CH5 3YB . Negotiations have ensured that prices will be little more than this year and being a De Vere hotel, it is hoped that it will be of a similar standard to the Marriott this year.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS & CLUB COMMITTEE (List attached)

Although John Sheldrake and David Hilton had resigned from the Committee, the President stated that unless any members wished to submit any other nominations, it was not his intention to add further Committee members at the present time.

This year, the President was not due for re-election, but the two Vice-Presidents, John McCaughrean and Alfie Windsor, were, together with our Hon. Treasurer, Chris Smith, who all confirmed they were willing to stand again. There being no other nominations, these Officers were duly confirmed

It was recorded at last year's AGM that our Hon. Secretary, Margaret Hollinrake had indicated her wish to retire. Margaret had most helpfully continued with her duties until March/April of this year.

Following a discussion at the London Barbeque, the President had found an excellent 'volunteer' in Ian Minchin, who needed no introduction to most members, and had been a well known member of the South West Branch for many years and also at the many gatherings of his 52/54 term.

Ian had taken on the Club secretarial duties in July in an acting capacity.

The President proposed that he be formally elected as Hon. Secretary of the Club.

The appointment was proposed by Matt Burrow, seconded by David Corkhill, and passed unanimously. Ian thanked the Members and stated that he would only be able to carry out his duties with the help of the many other members who worked continuously on behalf of the Club.

The President then presented to Ian ,his Badge of Office and also, belatedly, one to Alfie Windsor, as Vice President The President congratulated them both on their respective appointments.

9. TEASER 100 CLUB

Chris Smith, as Hon. Treasurer, reminded the meeting that the Club needed to raise around £5,000 in additional funds each year to ensure that two issues of 'The Cadet' could be produced in its present form and distributed to the membership.

For many Club members, who are unable to attend meetings, the Cadet is a lifeline which keeps them abreast of club events and news of their chums.

In order to raise the necessary funds, the committee had launched the "Teaser 100 Club" .He stressed the "100" referred to the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Conway Club and did not infer any limit on membership numbers. He also confirmed membership is not restricted to club members.

Summarising the many questions and answers discussed, the following was agreed:

a) The first draw would be at the 2010 Annual Dinner, and the second in February 2011.

c) A first prize of £500, a second of £200 and two third prizes of £150 at each draw (twice a year).

In conclusion, it was confirmed that the Teaser 100 Club would be reviewed after 1 year, as it's success or otherwise could only be judged by support over a period of time.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ernest Barron asked whether, as a maritime nation, our members felt the Club should lobby politicians (e.g. Ian Duncan Smith) re the present government decisions on spending cuts, which if carried out in their rumoured form, could threaten the Royal Navy, as a credible force.

The President replied that a few members had raised the same point, whilst others held that the Club should focus it's attentions on serving the members rather than attempting to influence political policy decisions.

On balance, the President considered a better option may be to write to members local MPs. There were no other questions.

11. DATE & VENUE FOR THE NEXT AGM

The next AGM to be held at the St. David's Hotel, Nr. Chester on Saturday 8th October 2011. (Time to be confirmed).

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1602 hrs.