

## Minutes for Aldermaston History Group Committee Meeting

Friday 10 November 2023 on Zoom

Present: Chris Boott (CB), Peter Brown (PB), Peter Hulme (PH), Richard Moseley (RM), Dave Shirt (DS),

Apologies: Karen Dignan (KD), Chris Newman (CN), Peter Oldridge (PO)

- 1 Minutes of the Last Meeting
  - a. Friday 28 July 2023 - agreed
- 2 Matters arising from the Minutes – PH thanked all who were involved in supporting the two venues for Heritage Open Days.
- 3 Items for Decision - none
- 4 Items for Discussion
  - a. Schedule of proposed talks/events for 2024

Confirmed dates for 2024 are:

Wednesday 17 January – Josh Dugdale – ‘The Mount family and Wasing Estate’.

Further talk dates:

Wednesday 17 April – possible Dr Glenn Middleton, Merlin Memories;

If so, see if Denis Carter also can do a presentation. **Action CB**

Wednesday 17 July – David Peacock, Swing Riots (with particular reference to local riot input) **Action PH**

Wednesday 6 November (AGM) – Explore if Museum of Rural Life (Merl) have talk programme **Action PH**

Suggested topics for future talks:

Surrige’s activities in Aldermaston, willow growing and cricket bats.

CB offered to approach Kerry Thomas who is in touch with John Surrige. **Action CB.**

It was suggested an ‘Aldermaston in WW2’ themed evening could provide contributions from various speakers, such as Mike Harris(?) Greenham Control Tower (**CB to check**) and Spitfires in Tadley – Jean Chapman’s contact (**PH to check**) and the possibility of contributions from members (eg RM/ATS). If subject matter appropriate (not

duplicating previous TADS talks), explore joint meeting with TADS in Parish Hall.

- b. Members' Events. Trip to the AWE museum Wednesday 6 December – 19 confirmed participants. Thanks again given to DS for facilitating this. Further information regarding precise timings and access arrangements to be circulated once received from AWE. **Action PH/CB**

Narrowboat trip on the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust boat Matilda Too around Reading. Investigate 45 minute trip. Probably best May/June 2024. **Action PH**

If Museum of English Rural Life (Merl) not able to give talk, explore Members' group visit in 2024. **Action PH**

Discuss with Beth Asbury whether West Berks Museum might be able to provide a Members' visit, focusing on Aldermaston artefacts. **Action PH/CB**

- c. Oral history recordings – Recordings from David Moore and Denis Carter awaiting editing. CB to investigate free alternatives to Audacity editing software which might be easier to use. **Action CB/PH**
- d. Conservation Area Appraisal – Draft CAA submitted to Debra Inston at West Berkshire Council in January 2022 and response from consultant received Feb 23. Aldermaston Conservation Area Appraisal Group met on 24 July and revised draft re-submitted to WBC 13 August 2023. Response awaited, although it is understood WBC have no current Conservation Officers, as one remaining staff member was seconded to Development Control. Aldermaston Parish Council have reported their concerns to WBC at lack of effective Conservation and Enforcement controls (which may be in breach of Council's statutory obligations). DS reported no response received by APC at previous meeting, but there may be news at next week's APC meeting.
- e. Membership of History Organisations – Existing membership of Berkshire Local History Association (BLHA) at £18 pa. Membership of British Association of Local History (BALH) which offers public liability insurance (included in £75 pa membership fee) renewed Jan 2023. CB to provide BLHA with ongoing details of AHG events diary. **Action CB.**
- f. Subscriptions – DS confirmed 31 fully paid £20 subscriptions to date from September 2023; including new members whose joining was galvanised by the chance of the AWE Education Centre visit. Treasurer expressed preference to not offering pro-rata subscriptions to part-year joining members.

- g. Financial update – Current bank balance £1752.63, which reflects all membership payments. The meeting was reminded the budget, in order to build a financial reserve, was for a membership of 40; although guest meeting fees over the last year have helped to offset speaker fees. On a cost theme, CB mentioned the website hosting had been established with CommunitySites for a five year period from the launch of the website in 2019; he felt they had delivered well, including a seamless technology upgrade, and he suggested talking to them in early 2024 to explore the possibility and costs of them continuing to host.
- h. Research Projects – PH confirmed the exploration of a selection of Royal Berkshire Archives ‘Aldermaston’ entries and will produce a synopsis of material found, under the RBA reference. RM also undertaking similar project: PH and RM to share results. **Action RM/PH**  
 RM will lead the K&A Trust washhouse research project - contact is Chair of Kennet and Avon Trust, Reading Branch, Graham Puddephat: graham@southcotemill.co.uk or reading.chairman@katrust.org.uk  
 Size of AHG display board to be established and the use of QR codes a possible route to providing additional information. **Action RM**  
 RM to progress list of films/programmes using Aldermaston Manor, to form the basis of a website post. A discussion felt that the limited nature of images would not provide any significant copyright challenges – if required a ‘take down’ approach would be adopted. CB suggested sending him a word document for other potential posts.  
**Action CB/RM**  
 CB confirmed he put Sue Phillips in touch with Gordon Timmins re: interest in researching Forster family, but SP’s recent operation has taken precedence.  
 KD confirmed in email receipt of Mr Goddard’s Aldermaston archives and will work on producing a story for the website. **Action KD**
- i. Relationships with local organisations - All agreed it was worth considering approaching other relevant groups if there was a topic likely to be of interest, (as with the January Pottery film) including TADS (Tadley’s local history group) and, as mentioned earlier, adding our events to Berkshire Local History Association’s database. PH has been in touch with TADS chair, Carol Stevens, and TADS will investigate on their archive day on 25 November if there are any Aldermaston-relevant items they wish to pass on. TADS have also offered to provide a written list of Aldermaston-related items in their archive for addition to our Members area. **Action PH**
- j. Committee Membership. It was agreed additional committee members would be welcome, especially if they had an area they were keen to actively contribute to.

Dave Shirt advised the meeting he would relinquish the role of Treasurer at the November 2024 AGM; he was warmly thanked for his contribution to AHG since its formation. Richard Moseley kindly volunteered (as a qualified accountant) to take over the role of Treasurer, which was fully welcomed by the Committee. DS and RM to liaise and arrange for RM to be signatory etc on Barclays account.

**Action DS/RM**

k. Donation of C Hall painting and future custody

PH advised he was initially exploring with local institutions what their conditions might be for offering a safe haven to items such as the Christopher Hall painting recently gifted to AHG (subject to future discussions with the donor, Mary Ball). West Berks Museum only accept items as gifts, not as a loan; from Rosie Everitt's comments it appears RBA have items in their archive which are on loan to them. PH to continue investigating appropriate institutions. **Action PH**

CB advised all AHG artefacts will be kept in box, with silica gel sachet, in his study. **Action CB**

5 Items for Information

RM has been in touch with Alan Deacon re: shirt belonging to member of Stranges Brewery family – story to follow on website.

6 Date, time and location of

a. next committee meeting - 2.00pm Friday 26 January 2024 via Zoom

7 AOB – None