

MINUTES of the Thirty-first Annual General Meeting of the Gateacre Society, held on Tuesday 25th October 2005 at Gateacre Chapel Hall, Sandfield Road, Liverpool L25.

THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED by 25 members, as follows: Lawrence Broadhurst, Ron Brown, Mary S. Champion, E. Chitty, M. Chitty, K.J. Close, Brian Doman, Joan Downey, R. Elson, Joan M. Fearn, Peter Fearn, Joan Gadd, A.A. Gorst, Joyce Jelley, Celia Kelly, Geraldine McAndrew, G.A. McCann, M. McGuire, Jessica McKenzie, George Mason, Melanie O'Brien, Beryl Plent, Mary Roberts, Patricia Roberts, and Pat Webb.

THE MEETING BEGAN at 8.09 p.m. with the Chairman, Tony McCann, extending a welcome to those present.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Pam Ball, David Buckley, Joan Cohen, Sylvia Davis, Rosemary Doman and Sandra Sandland.
2. **The MINUTES OF THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**, held on 26th October 2004 had been previously circulated to all members. On a proposal by Mary Roberts, seconded by Jessica McKenzie, they were approved as a true record.
3. **ANNUAL REPORT.** Joan Gadd, as Hon.Secretary, gave a report of the year's activities.

The Society's Committee had objected to five planning applications. Two were in Blackwood Avenue - a proposed new house and a mobile phone mast, both of which would in our view have spoilt the street scene - and both were refused planning permission by the City Council. The other three were in Gateacre Village: a large apartment development at the former Cleggs Felt Factory, a block of flats on the site of Michael Taylor's garage, and the making permanent of the takeaway food use at 185 Grange Lane. The outcome here was mixed: the Cleggs application was withdrawn, the Michael Taylor application was refused, and the Happy Family takeaway application was granted.

After due consideration, the Committee had decided not to pursue any further its complaints about the Council's action regarding the site of Hillside & Atalaya in Gateacre Brow or the loss of the pine trees in Hunts Cross Avenue. Mrs Gadd emphasised, though, that we would be keeping a close watch on future planning applications to prevent a recurrence. The long-running saga of the disappearing greenspace in Grange Lane had had a more successful outcome. Following intervention by the Ombudsman, the City Council had at last restored - more or less - the portion of Gateacre Comprehensive School's playing field which had been used for so-called 'temporary' classrooms and car parking.

The Committee remained disappointed at not being consulted directly on all local planning applications - though we had been slightly amused to discover that the Planning Department had addressed a consultation letter, about the Cleggs planning application, to the bronze bust of Queen Victoria but not to us! We had been asked for our views on the proposed 'moratorium' on new housebuilding, and had responded in support of the policy. We had also written in support of the Council's Rights of Way map, and in particular the retention of the long-established footpath between Grange Weint and Cuckoo Lane.

The Society had worked closely with the Friends of Gateacre - who scored notable successes in this year's North West in Bloom competition - in developing proposals for the improvement of the Village Green and the restoration of its monuments. The Society had also contributed to the production of their 2006 Calendar, both financially and by providing most of the photographs. Mrs Gadd gave special thanks to the Friends for producing and distributing our 'History on your Doorstep' leaflet, which had helped to publicise both of our organisations throughout the local area.

Two other local historical projects were also mentioned. The first was the re-erection of the 1652 doorcase by Bellway Homes, on the site of the Gateacre Hall Hotel. We had been surprised and delighted to receive an email in March, informing us that a 'time capsule' had been discovered when the old hotel was demolished. The second was the Prefab Project, aiming to record the history of the Belle Vale prefab estate and the memories of those who lived there between the 1940s and the 1960s. Both of these projects were being publicised via our Newsletter and our website.

During the past year there had been five open meetings: In November, Martin Reece, a former President of The South Liverpool Photographic Society, showed some wonderful pictures of the Venice Carnival. In January, Bill Willcock took us on an Arctic cruise. In March, Colin Twist spoke to us about The Romans in Britain. In May, we had a talk by Neil Peterson, 'Head of Liverpool Welcome' at the Culture Company. And in July, Ron Davies spoke about the History of Customs and Excise. For Heritage Open Day in September we had a sales table and exhibition of photographs in St. Stephen's Church, together with guided walks around the village led by Mike Chitty. In May we had once again joined with members of the Wavertree Society for a coach trip, this time to Leeds.

There had been nine Committee meetings, most of which had been held in the Chapel Hall. Mrs Gadd thanked the Chapel committee for the use of the hall, and gave special thanks to Joan Downey for 'always being around' when needed. Six Newsletters had been sent out. Mrs Gadd thanked the deliverers for their help, and Mike Chitty for producing them.

Finally, Mrs Gadd congratulated the Friends of Gateacre on winning a second 'In Bloom' award. Also for the terrific success of their event in August: 'Home Front Recall Day'. The weather was perfect, everyone who came along had enjoyed themselves - and we sold out of tea towels!

The Chairman thanked Mrs Gadd for her report and asked whether anyone had any comments or questions. However, there were none.

- 4. FINANCIAL REPORT.** An Income & Expenditure Account for the year ending 30th September 2005 had been prepared by the Hon.Treasurer, Eryl Chitty. Mrs Chitty gave a verbal report on its main features.

A profit had once again been made this year - albeit a small one. The main reason was that we had sold more tea towels than any previous year. Also, the subscription rates had gone up, and we had the benefit of a full year's interest from the Yorkshire Building Society. The Friends of Gateacre had kindly given us £100 to cover our Home Front Recall Day expenses.

Mrs Chitty pointed out that the surplus of £128.08 was not a 'true' figure as we had yet to pay £65 for printing the last three issues of the Newsletter. On the other hand our expenditure had included a hefty sum on books and tea towels, which continued to sell very well.

Mrs Chitty thanked everyone for their continued support, and invited questions. A member asked if there is an annual hire fee for the Chapel Hall, but was told that we pay 'per meeting'. Another member asked whether there is a set fee for speakers, but was told that it varies - generally it's £20 to £30 but some won't accept anything. On a proposal by Ron Elson, seconded by Joan Fearn, the Accounts were approved.

- 5. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT.** Beryl Plent told the meeting that the Society currently had 261 paid-up members, and another 5 had promised to pay off their arrears. We had lost 15 but gained 17 new members during the year. Mrs Plent said she had been pleased to receive letters of thanks from members who appreciated the Newsletter and the work which the Society had been doing.
- 6. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS.** Tony McCann referred to the old adage, 'if the clock isn't broken, don't mend it'. He said that the Society was continuing to work well, thanks to the efforts of the people either side of him and others in the body of the hall. Undesirable things which might have happened didn't happen, because members of the Committee and the Society had worked together 'for the good of Gateacre'. Mr McCann gave particular thanks to Brian Doman who, as Vice Chairman, had stood in for him during his frequent absences including a spell in hospital. He also thanked all of those who had come along to the meeting on what was a very wet evening.
- 7. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE.** Brian Doman, as Vice Chairman, announced that one nomination had been received for the post of Chairman: Tony McCann. There being no other nominations, Mr McCann was declared elected. The Chairman then read out the list of other Officer nominations which had been received: Brian Doman (as Vice-Chairman), Joan Gadd (as Hon.Secretary), and Eryl Chitty (as Hon.Treasurer). There being no competing nominations, all of these people were declared duly elected. The Chairman then read out the list of written nominations as Ordinary Committee Members (from whom the posts of Environment Secretary, Membership Secretary, etc., would be filled later): Mary Champion, Mike Chitty, Joan Cohen, Rosemary Doman and Beryl Plent. He appealed for further nominations from the floor, but there were none. All of the people named were then declared elected on a show of hands.
- 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** Ron Elson asked whether the dates of meetings followed a regular pattern, as the Newsletter - which he thought was otherwise excellent - sometimes gave only a couple of days' notice of interesting talks. Mike Chitty, on behalf of the Committee, said they accepted that distribution of the Newsletter, which relied on a loyal but ageing band of volunteers, was becoming a problem. Posting-out of all Newsletters was currently being considered, but this would obviously have cost implications. Ron Brown asked whether Newsletters could not be sent out by email to those members who requested it. Mike Chitty agreed to put a note in the next Newsletter, inviting those with email addresses to let the Committee know.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, the meeting was declared closed at 8.45 p.m. The Chairman reminded those present that two short talks were to follow, before the serving of refreshments: Celia Kelly on the Belle Vale Prefab Project, and Beryl Plent and Mike Chitty on the newly-discovered 'Gateacre Time Capsule'.