

Report for the November 2015 meeting of the Malvern Civic Society

On Friday 6 November we held the 56th Annual General Meeting, followed by a forum for discussion of key business matters, on which members' views were invited.

President Dudley Brook welcomed everyone to the Eden Church Conference Centre in Grovewood Road (off Townsend Way), the new environment for monthly meetings. He was pleased to see a large turnout and hoped that it was a good move to come to this new venue. (Members present when later asked about the venue gave a big "thumbs up" for it.)

Chairman Clive Hooper reminded us that his report is contained in the Annual Report for everyone to read at leisure. He announced that the national Civic Voice Award had been awarded to us for the third time in five years. Clive went on to note that help and support are needed for a range of activities such as planning, architecture (the Historic Environment Record), town walks, editorial work, the Friends of Malvern Railway and the Friends of Malvern cemeteries. He then gave a summary on the Society's opposition to the demolition of the old community hospital in Lansdowne Road, confirming that the Victorian Society and Historic England have also given their support for its retention. The Grange had been secured as an Asset of Community Value in 2014 and we are now producing a business plan for its future use at the request of the District Council. Finally, he thanked not only all the members who are part of formal committees for their work, but also those people who have worked very hard for the Society outside of those committees. All officers and Executive Committee members were re-elected. He warmly thanked John Handley, who was standing down as a Vice-President and who had been a former Chairman, for all the work he had done for the Society, and he passed on best wishes to John and his wife in their new home in Dorset.

The Hon. Treasurer Andrew Huntley summarised his own report, confirming that we have been able to maintain a full list of activities and finish the financial year with a healthy set of accounts. He urged those who have not yet paid their subscription to do so, payment details of which are included in the Annual Report.

In the forum the first topic raised was that of a commemorative plaque and its location for the former Powick Hospital. Dr John Harcup confirmed that the Elgar Society is already in support of this and suggested the next steps for this project. Further topics covered proposals on preferred ways in which to spend project money, such as installing new, ceramic busts on plinths in Priory Park, erecting more statues of famous local people, installing handrails by the steps down from the back of the theatre to Priory Park and resurfacing the path from Abbey Road down to the Priory. Other proposals included the restoration of the Elgar statue and fountain in Belle Vue Terrace, the construction of more drinking fountains and an information board at the retail park about the Roman pottery finds excavated there. Buildings at risk and an update on their status were also discussed, with particular interest focusing on Holyrood House, the former establishment of Dr James Gully which is of significant value to the spa history of Malvern.

Katharine Barber announced that the 2016 Civic Week will be held between the 25 June and 1 July and the theme will be "Flowers and Gardens".

Another book from a member has been produced, this one being by Cora Weaver, which is an update of her 1988 book on Elgar. A book signing event is being held on 22 November afternoon at the Elgar Birthplace museum.

The next talk will be on Friday 8 January 2016 and is called "An Upside Down World". Chris Flower will talk about the misericords in Malvern's Priory Church. There is an admission charge of £1.