

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION "Y" Services (Garats HaY) Branch (BR 3502) www.garatshay.org.uk



President: Chairman: Vice Chairman: Secretary: Treasurer: Col (Ret'd) E Sambell OBE Mr N Berry Dr J McDermott Mr M G Foster Mrs L Oldfield

MINUTES OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION "Y" SERVICES (GARATS HAY) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE GREENFIELDS SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB, HOLT DRIVE, LOUGHBOROUGH, LE11 3HZ, ON SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2018, COMMENCING AT 1400 HOURS.

MEMBERS PRESENT: 19

1. THE EXHORTATION:

The President, Eric Sambell, requested members to stand. He then read out the names of Branch members who had passed away since the last AGM: Steve Haynes, Norman James, Geoffrey Millward, J R Percival, Bill Poulton, Andy Riddell, Chris Sinnett, Kay Staddon, Bernard Stephens, and Chris Stevenson. He then cited the Exhortation.

2. TO CLOSE THE AGENDA:

There were no additional items and the Agenda was closed by the Chairman, Nick Berry.

3. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked those who had come from far away. He said that there was quite a lot to get through and asked the Secretary for apologies for absence:

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Secretary, Martin Foster, reported that Apologies had been received from: Terry and Sue Whittles, Dave Street, Jim and Linda McDermott, Lyn and Bob Oldfield, Mike Frankish, Mike Barry, John Bird, Brian Cadman, Mike Hill, Rick Kiralfy, John and Angelika Neal, Linda Swann, and Bob and Joy White.

5. MINUTES OF THE 2017 BRANCH AGM:

The minutes of the previous AGM held at the Greenfields Sports & Social Club, Loughborough, and circulated to members, were confirmed as a true record.

Proposed by: Pete Derrick Seconded by: Dennis Weir **Carried**

6. MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA:

The Secretary confirmed that there were no matters arising from the previous Minutes that were not on the Agenda.

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7. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The President, Eric Sambell gave his address. He said that this weekend we were looking back 100 years and it was also a time when we could look forward to the future and how the Legion might develop as we see major changes to the armed forces.

In 1965 total UK armed forces strength was over 400 thousand and it was now down to 140 thousand with further reductions planned. Hopefully, the requirement for welfare would decline as the number of servicemen, and hence veterans, decreased but that would not diminish the need for a strong and vibrant Legion. We remained the custodians of remembrance, honouring those who had made the ultimate sacrifice; and through remembrance, we ensure that the horrors of war are not forgotten. The exhibition of the Shrouds of the Somme displayed at the Olympic Park portrayed over 72,000 British Commonwealth serviceman killed at the Somme with no known grave. Only if we keep these facts alive would future generations realize that armed conflict really is the last resort to resolving international issues.

He also outlined the need to document the history of the formation and progress of the Branch so that it would be available for all in the future.

Finally he thanked those Committee members who were standing down and those who were taking on new responsibilities for their excellent service. Many voluntary organizations struggled to continue, not through lack of members but a reluctance of members to step forward to take on the duties of officers and other responsibilities. Our Branch remained strong through the efforts of those who were prepared to give time and effort to ensure its continued success and we must always be grateful to them for their service.

8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2018/19

The Chairman, Nick Berry, presented his report and objectives for the coming year.

1. "Introduction. I'll start with a confession; when Martin's email arrived asking the committee for their reports I had a brief moment of disbelief, "it can't possibly be November already! Can it?" Well, it quite clearly is and the initial disbelief is probably a good indication that 2018 has been yet another busy year for our Branch. Looking back though, I recall how when I took over from Dennis I spoke of the apprehension I had with regards to time and the honest acknowledgement that I, by myself, would struggle to commit as much energy and time as Dennis and many of my predecessors were able to do. In the spirit of 'many hands make light work' I called on not just the committee, but also the wider branch membership for their support and it is humbling to have witnessed the overwhelmingly positive response I've received. Once again, my principle officers (Jim, Lyn and Martin) have been outstanding: whilst Dave Rose with the refreshed and revitalised website and Dave Lawrence as our primary Standard Bearer have been equally forthcoming with ideas, activity and support. There are, of course, many others who deserve mention and knowing that by naming the few I run the risk of upsetting the many, please know I am eternally grateful and thankful to everyone who has contributed to the running of the branch over the last 12 months or so. Thank you all.

Highlights of the Year

- 2. GP90. The Legion's flagship event, GP90, went ahead on 8 Aug 18 and we were represented by Dennis Weir (who carried and laid our Wreath) and our Standard Bearer Dave Lawrence. From both their own testimonies and the enormous amount of publicity from the Legion itself, it was clearly an impressive and moving event. However, GP90 was more than just the wonderful spectacle of commemoration at Ypres, it was an opportunity to establish links to the past for the current and future generations. Our small part in that was realised with the inclusion of students from the Defence Sixth Form College at Welbeck, an establishment we have particular and close links with. Jim was instrumental in engaging with the College with our ideas and they themselves were enthusiastic in their response. To cut a long story short, a competition was held to write a poem or dedication that would be included on our Wreath and the winning poem was presented to the branch at a parade rehearsal on 6 Jul. Me, Jim and Linda Mc Dermott, Dennis Weir and Pete Gilbert were fortunate enough to be hosted by Maj Jules Swindells and I've included the winning poem as an annex to this report for those who have not vet seen it.
- 3. New Branch Standard. Which leads me onto the second highlight, the laying-up of the old Branch Standard and dedication of the new Branch Standard. To give some background; thanks to the sterling efforts of both Dave Lawrence and Pete Gilbert, the number of events and activities where the Branch's Standard has been paraded has doubled in the last two or three years. Whilst this is was welcome and encouraged it had taken its toll on the Standard and a proposal was put forward to purchase a replacement, ideally in time to parade it at GP90. Unfortunately this was not possible due to various diary conflicts; nevertheless, on 19 Aug at St Mary in the Elms, with many branch members, supported by Standards from across the Legion and other Service associations and several local dignitaries, the old Standard was laid-up and the new Standard dedicated with due ceremony and dignity. Afterwards guests were invited to join the branch in the village hall for refreshments. Once again, this was a team effort; however, it would be wrong to not pay particular credit to Jim and Linda for their organisation (and scones) and Dave Lawrence for his preparations and guidance relating to long forgotten drill. Once again, there were several others who provided vital assistance during the planning and on the day itself; thank you all and please forgive my memory for not naming you individually.
- 4. The Y Services Plot at the NMA. Since last year's AGM, we have taken on responsibility for the Y Service plot at the National Memorial Arboretum. Under the stewardship of Graham Barber and with the enthusiastic endeavours of more members that I have memory to properly recall, there have been several visits to the NMA (including our Summer Gathering) to give the Plot some regular TLC. Thank you to everyone who has given their time and I encourage others to join the growing band of volunteers. I am also pleased to report that we have, at last, received the residual funds that were held by JSSU(V). These have been added to the very generous donation from the Nichols family following Joan's funeral last year and another very generous donation of £1000 from the Birgelen Veterans Association which will all remain 'ring-fenced' for on-going upkeep of the Y Services Plot. There are several conversations on-going with regards to how we use the funds for the betterment of the Plot and how to secure its long-term management; as and when we have firmer proposals we will of course let the branch know.

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Objectives for the Coming Year. As I look to the coming year and consider what I wish to achieve, I find myself returning to old, established objectives, which whilst not perfect, have proven sufficient and broad enough to warrant their retention; my objectives therefore remain:

- 5. Focus on our Members. My primary objective remains the people who make up our Branch. Whilst the very nature of who and what we are sees us spread far and wide, we remain at our core a group of people who share a number of different bonds and we must not forget the simple truth that everything we do is about people. I will continue to endeavour to ensure that members are kept informed in as timely a manner as possible, using the website and regular newsletters to achieve this.
- 6. Deliver on our Responsibilities to our Members. I aim to ensure that, if or when needed, any member of our Branch who needs the support or assistance of the Legion, is able to access the appropriate services, as quickly as possible and via the most suitable route. Pete Derrick and Lawrence Butler-Perks remain key people who have vital pert to play in achieving this objective.
- 7. Grow our Membership. My third objective has arguably proven to be the hardest, that of increasing our numbers. However, this should not put us off and whilst ideas and initiatives have not come to the fruition I would have liked, I ask that each and every one of you take every opportunity you can to introduce new members to our number."

9. REPORTS:

a. Secretary

The Secretary reported on the following:

- Various circulars regarding the Festival of Remembrance, Great Pilgrimage 90, elections of National Chairman and Vice Chairman and to the Board of Trustees had been received during the year and actioned accordingly. Highlights were:
 - o The Branch continued to be represented at the highest levels of the Legion with Terry Whittles as National Chairman, David Whimpenny on the Board of Trustees, John Clark as the National Branches District representative on the Membership Council, and of course Dave Street as Chairman of the National Branches District. Not forgetting that Jim McDermott is our representative on the National Branches District Committee.
- Following on from this, the AGM will be asked to support David Whimpenny's nomination for election to the position of National Vice Chairman and to the Board of Trustees this would be later on in the meeting. Under the new rules he is able to stand for both positions but can only be appointed to one
- In July 2018 we were approached by Woodhouse Parish Council, who wished to apply for a Charnwood Heritage Plaque to mark the contribution of Beaumanor Hall and the village to military signals intelligence in WWII. Specifically, the Council sought our support for their nomination. Unfortunately nothing further had been heard.

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- He reported on the new procedure for purchasing Festival of Remembrance tickets. Instead of being allocated to Branches (we used to get four), members of the Legion now have to purchase them either online or by phone.
- Lastly, he said that this was his last report as Secretary as he had come to the end of his term of office and a new Secretary would be elected at the end of the meeting. He said that all good things must come to an end however, and that he now found that due to voluntary work locally and family commitments he had to devote more time to his duties at home. He said that he had enjoyed the experience, and gained further knowledge of how the Royal British Legion functioned. The post was not onerous, providing you kept up to date and on top of day to day issues.

He said that it had been an interesting journey and he was grateful for the comradeship, friendship, support and dedication of past and present Committee and Branch members. He hoped that through the coming years new blood would appear to take the Branch forward in its support of the ex-Service Community and in particular the Y Services.

Finally, he wished the Branch every success in the future and that he would be available should his successor, or any other Committee Member, need any assistance.

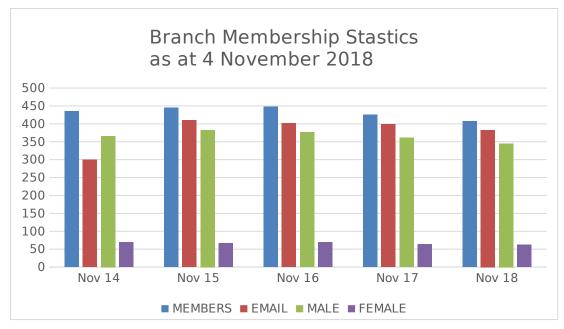
The Chairman expressed is thanks.

b. Membership

The Membership Secretary, Pete Derrick, reported that as of today:

- We had 411 confirmed Members, a loss of 14 since November 2017.
- 387 members were contactable by Email, but didn't always reply!
- 347 of our members were male and 63 are female.
- Of those members who had volunteered their date of birth, 248 were aged 60 and above, 143 were aged between 40 and 59 and 7 are below 40.
- 368 paid by Direct Debit, 6 by Cash, 31 by Credit or Debit Card and 5 by PayPal.

He reported that at present we had 30 members who were on the 'Payments Outstanding' List: those were members who had yet to renew their membership by the due date. Of those 30 members, 21 had not paid as at the end of October. Of those 21, 17 were due to pay by Debit or Credit Card so with Debit/Credit Cards changing fairly frequently, a large proportion would probably lapse. He said that it was clear from the above figures that Direct Debit was still the most reliable method of fees collection.



c. Branch Community Support Rep (Linda McDermott) In Linda's absence the Secretary presented her report:

She said that there was little to report with no specific welfare or similar cases to handle. During the year she had, where appropriate, sent messages or telephone calls of condolence to families of deceased members.

d. National Branches District (Jim McDermott)

In Jim's absence the Secretary presented his report:

"1. I attended all NBD Committee meetings during the year as well as the NBD Annual Meeting in January. Branch representation at this committee continues to provide useful insights into the workings of the Legion. Communication with the National Branches Membership Support Officer (MSO) Lawrence Butler Perks (LBP), during the year, have been frequent and he has provided assistance and advice with respect to several issues not the least of which concerned rules and regulations relating to Branch Standards. With effect from October 2018 LBP takes on the additional responsibility of supporting the RBL Ladies Section and his title is now: Membership Support Officer – National Formations.

2. I was elected as the National Branches District 2018 National Conference delegate and attended the National Conference in Belfast. My presence proved useful since I was able to support Branch delegate Dennis Weir's expenses claim (which had been refused) with proof that he had in fact been present!

3. For information, in addition to this branch, National Branches District includes: Classic Vehicles, Cyclists, The NMA, Riders, South African, St James, Professionals, REME Recovery Mechs and LGBTQ branches. The latter two were formed during 2018.

4. Some General Points from NBD

a. NBD Branches

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b. Festival of Remembrance Tickets

With the introduction of the new method for obtaining Festival of Remembrance Tickets, the system of awarding extra FoR tickets to NBD committee members for attendance and for those attending the NBD Annual Meeting is no more."

e. Y Services Memorial, NMA (Jim McDermott)

In Jim's absence the Secretary presented his report:

"NMA Plot Coordinator Graham Barber has organized a number of working parties during the year and group from JSSU (V) was also in attendance and varnished the benches. Members of the committee and other Branch members including the National Chairman also gave the plot a good seeing to prior to the last committee meeting.

The ring fenced fund for NMA plot maintenance has received a welcome boost of \pounds 1,000 following the winding down of the BVA Association in its present form.

Following a Branch Committee agreement that a sign is needed at the entrance to the Y Services Organization memorial plot at the NMA, a letter was sent to the NMA Operations Director to enquire as to the requirements for such as sign. It seems that the only guidelines are that the signs must be made of good quality materials

Attempts to purchase a lump of rock to be engraved and placed at the entrance have proved unsuccessful. Other plots have aluminium/polymer entrance signs which have a 7-10 year life span and I produced a putative design based on similar materials (aluminium/acrylic) to assist in obtaining a cost estimate. This design and a cost estimate are at the end of this report.

To move this project forward we will submit a design proposal to the NMA Landscape and Memorials Committee (which meets in January, April, July and October) with a full technical specification including materials to be used, wording and colours.

A second strand of NMA related thinking was the idea of installing commemorative brass plaques on the wooden benches located within the plot. I have obtained a quote for engraved brass plaques. Word from the NMA is that any arrangement for such plaques must include consideration of the NMA's fund raising schemes but what they mean by this is not clear. In any event, I understand from Martin that there is currently a moratorium on such plaques and as a result this idea can be shelved for the moment."

f. Poppy Appeal Organiser

Dennis Weir, Poppy Appeal Co-ordinator presented his report.

He was pleased to report that our total for the year November 2017 to November 2018 was close to £3,000.

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He said that almost **£400** pounds had been donated by members either as spontaneous and largely anonymous gifts or as donations for Legion and Branch badges.

The proceeds of a collection in memory of our dear friend, Stephen Haynes, who sadly died in January of this year, raised over **£550** pounds.

Easy fundraising brought in four quarterly payments which added up to over **£575** pounds. He said that there were still only 65 branch members participating in this scheme and it was a pity it was not more, because it remained a very good source of Poppy Appeal contributions. He gave particular thanks to the mysterious Dave L who topped the donation leader board by some considerable distance. He could not reveal his true identity, but he hoped he would continue to maintain this STANDARD and he hoped his efforts would not FLAG.

And last but by no means least we had our running machine, Warrant Officer Class One Gill Bennett of the Royal Naval Reserve.

Dennis had asked Gill to attend the AGM today so that we could personally offer our collective thanks to her for her fundraising efforts over the course of the summer when she completed 5×10 km city runs, carrying her trusty British Legion bucket.

He then asked Gill to come forward now and hand over her cheque to the Chairman who would then announce the total that Gill had raised.

Gill then came forward and presented a cheque for $\pounds 1,110$ – thanks were expressed to her for her generosity. The President then presented her with a Branch Certificate of Appreciation. She thanked the President and said that she would be doing more runs next year.

Dennis then said that the current Poppy Appeal total was £1,816.69 and together with Gill's cheque the final total for the year was £2,926.69.

He then asked the AGM to approve the transfer of **£73.31** from Branch funds to round the total to **£3,000**:

Proposed by: Dave Geere Seconded by: John Swann **Carried**

g. Standard Bearers

The Standard Bearer, Dave Lawrence presented his report:

1. The Branch Standard was paraded at the following events during the last 12 months:

- 12 November 2017 Remembrance Sunday church service and parade, Woodhouse.
- 20 January 2018 National Branches District Annual Meeting, Haig House
- 22 January 2018 Funeral of Steve Haynes, Leeds
- 08 February 2018 Funeral of Andy Riddell, Loughborough

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- 13 February 2018 Funeral of Alan Tyler, Loughborough
- 07 March 2018 Funeral of Barry Parsons, Ripon
- 27 March 2018 Funeral of Rob Wight, Cheltenham
- 13 April 2018 Funeral of Chris Sinnett, Shepshed
- 17 April 2018 Funeral of Barney Stephens, Loughborough
- 29 April 2018 ANZAC Day Commemoration, Cannock Chase CWGC Cemetery.
- 05 June 2018 Intelligence Corps Annual Commemoration Service, NMA Alrewas
- 30 June 2018 Armed Forces Day, Loughborough
- 06 July 2018 Welbeck College, Woodhouse (Presentation of GP90 wreath poem)
- 23 July 2018 Funeral of Lt Col (Retd) Chris Stevenson Int Corps at Lincoln & Coningsby
- 08 August 2018 GP90 Parade, Menin Gate, Belgium
- 19 August 2018 Decommission/Dedication ceremony of old/new standards, Woodhouse. (A full report of the event with photographs – penned by our branch Vice-Chairman - and published in the Loughborough Echo was viewable on the Branch Website (https://garatshay.org.uk/))
- 08 November 2018 Funeral of Mrs Marjorie Bushell, late ATS who worked at Beaumanor during 1941-45, at Kings Lyn and Norwich
- 10 November 2018 Branch Annual General Meeting, Loughborough

2. Monthly training sessions at the Warwickshire & Birmingham County Standard Bearer School continued at Bramcote barracks.

3. Planned outings for the Branch Standard were:

- 11 November 2018 Remembrance Sunday church service and parade, Woodhouse
- 24-25 November 2018 Birmingham International Tattoo
- 19 January 2019 National Branches District Annual Meeting Haig House, London
- 29 June 2019 Armed Forces Day parade, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Dave and the Deputy Standard Bearer, Pete Gilbert, for their efforts.

h. Webmaster (Dave Rice)

In Dave's absence the Secretary presented his report:

Martin reported that the website was running smoothly with no adverse issues. There was now a 'private' area of the website that could be accessed by logging on. At the moment this area held an area for AGM minutes and notifications, and an area for the 'Members List', otherwise known as the Voluntary Contact List.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Dave for all his enthusiasm and help in setting up and running the website.

10. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE BRANCH ACCOUNTS:

In Lyn's absence the Chairman presented the Branch Accounts for the year ended 30th June 2018. [Secretary's note: a copies of the Accounts were made available for members to see]

He briefly went through the accounts (approved by the Committee in July) and explained that the strange entry of minus £972.81 for the Poppy Appeal was the same problem that we had last year. The reason was that the Branch wrote a cheque to the Poppy Appeal in November each year whereas the financial year ended in June, so there was a discrepancy that the electronic accounting system LOMAS didn't appear to be able to reconcile.

He then asked the AGM to adopt the accounts:

Proposed by: Pete Derrick Seconded by: John Swann Carried

11. BRANCH SUBSCRIPTION AND JOINING FEE:

The Secretary said that the Membership Handbook required each branch to set a reasonable amount as a Branch joining fee as well as a Branch subscription fee. The amount of these fees should be decided by the members attending the AGM.

The Committee's recommendation to the AGM was that the joining fee be set at $\pounds 4.00$ and the Branch subscription to remain at its present level of $\pounds 5.00$.

The Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder that the Branch subscription for the year be set at ± 5.00 and the joining fee for the year be set at ± 4.00

Proposed by: Dennis Weir Seconded by: Helen Neal **Carried**

12. BRANCH ELECTIONS:

The Secretary reported on the following unopposed elections:

a. Branch Secretary

As Martin's term of office had come to an end it was necessary to elect a successor. John Swann had put himself forward and as he was the only candidate he was therefore elected as Branch Secretary, unopposed, for a three year term.

b. Branch Treasurer

Lyn Oldfield is the current Treasurer and her term of office came to an end today. She had indicated her willingness to continue to serve on the Committee and, since there had been no other candidate she was therefore elected Branch Treasurer, unopposed, for a three year term.

c. Branch Committee Member

Bob Oldfield is a current Committee member whose term of office came to an end today. He had indicated his willingness to continue to serve on the Committee and, since there had been no other candidate he was therefore elected as a Branch Committee Member, unopposed, for a three year term. The Chairman asked the AGM for members to come forward when positions on the Committee became available.

13. NOMINATION TO NATIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN ELECTION

The Secretary said that the Branch could nominate one person for election to the position of National Vice Chairman. The nomination had to be proposed, seconded and voted upon at this AGM.

David Whimpenny, a Branch member and currently on the Board of Trustees, wished to be nominated, and the Chairman asked for a proposer and a seconder.

Proposed by: John Swann Seconded by: Dennis Weir **Carried**

David Whimpenny was therefore nominated as the Branch's nomination for the National Vice Chairman's election.

14. NOMINATION TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION:

The Secretary explained that the Branch could nominate one person to the Board of Trustees. The nomination had to be proposed, seconded and voted upon at this AGM.

David Whimpenny, currently on the Board of Trustees and whose term of office had come to an end, wished to be re-elected. The Secretary commented that the current rules allowed for an individual to stand for more than one national position but they could only hold one position.

The Chairman then asked for a proposer and a seconder:

Proposed by: Dave Lawrence Seconded by: Dave Geere

Carried

David Whimpenny was therefore nominated as the Branch's nomination to the Board of Trustees.

15. APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL BRANCHES DISTRICT ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES:

The Chair explained that the AGM had to appoint two delegates to the National Branches District Annual Conference to be held in London on Saturday 20 January 2018. There being no volunteers from the floor, and as Linda McDermott and Dave Lawrence had already offered to attend, the Chairman asked for a proposer and a seconder

Proposed by: Pete Gilbert Seconded by: John Swann

Carried

Linda McDermott and Dave Lawrence were therefore appointed Branch delegates to the National Branches District Annual Conference 2019.

16. APPOINTMENT OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES:

Likewise, he explained that the AGM had to appoint two delegates to the RBL Annual Conference to be held in Bournemouth on 18-19 May 2019, and he asked for volunteers. Martin and Linda Foster volunteered and the Chairman asked for a proposer and a seconder:

Proposed by: Pete Gilbert Seconded by: Helen Neal

Carried

Martin and Linda Foster were therefore appointed Branch delegates to the Annual Conference 2019.

17. SUMMER GATHERING 2019

The Chairman asked the AGM if they wished to continue to hold a Summer Gathering next year, and if so – did anyone have any suggestions of where it might be held? There being no suggestions from the floor, he said that it had been suggested to hold the Gathering at the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum, Horning, in Norfolk over the weekend of 13/14 July 2019. The Chairman then asked for a proposer and a seconder:

Proposed by: Linda Foster Seconded by: John Swann

Carried

The Chairman said that Lyn and Bob Oldfield had been requested to make enquiries for suitable accommodation and he asked for volunteers to help: Martin Foster volunteered.

18. CLOSING REMARKS AND DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT AGM:

To conclude the Chairman said that the next AGM would take place at 2pm on Saturday 9th November 2019, in this same venue.

The meeting closed at 15:12.