

British Woodcarvers Association

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 13th May 2017

**The National Memorial Arboretum, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire,
DE13 7AR**

The meeting was called to order at 2.30 pm with 58 members present and welcomed by the chairman John Tybjerg.

1. Apologies for absence. These were received from Jason Townsend (Gazette Editor), Graeme Murray (Web Manager), Duncan McConachie (Durham), Terry Nokes (Bedfordshire) and Tim Holmes (Glos-Treasurer elect).
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held at Hatfield House on 7th May 2016 were taken as read and approved *nem.con*.
3. Matters arising. There were none.

4. Chairman's report. The Chairman thanked all the National Council Members, both those retiring and those continuing in post, for their invaluable help during his 7 months as Acting Chairman and in particular thanked Mark Davis for his work over 3 1/2 years in building up a strong relationship with The Master Carvers Association and The Guild of Joiners and Ceilers.

He gave a breakdown of the Shows that we have attended both at National and Regional level and emphasised the importance also of the small shows attended by just one region.

Our Insurance has been reviewed to ensure that we have both a competitive premium and the correct cover. The main change is that in order for the Insurers to appreciate how we work all Regional Leaders will be designated as Deputy Members of The National Council and all events must be made known to a Member or Deputy Member of the National Council.

The chairman was disappointed at the level of volunteers for the vacant National Council positions. There were only 9 enquiries of which only 7 turned into actual offers of help. Without more interest from the Members the future

of the BWA could be bleak. A more detailed job description of the various positions on the National Council will be published in the Gazette, especially when vacancies are approaching

Finally the Chairman mentioned the subject of Risk Assessment. This is something that we should all do for our routine meetings and may well be asked for when attending medium to large shows.

Eileen Walker offered to contact Regional Leaders for copies of their Assessment and to make these available to Regions who need a little help with the subject.

The full text of the Chairman's report is available from the Secretary on request.

5. National Secretary's report. Dave Shires announced that he would be standing down at this AGM and that Ken Veal (Essex) would be taking up the role, as the only fish in the sea! Much of the year had been taken up by the problems of the continuing governance of the BWA referred to by the Chairman. A major effort went into dealing with the BBC and the Countryside programme/event at Blenheim Palace in August. Despite the frustrations the 4 day event with 90 carvers from 8 regions was a great success with over 100,000 visitors. It would seem a repeat event is unlikely due to spiralling participation costs.

6. Treasurer's report. Ian Ford reported on the accounts up to 31st May 2017. The full accounts and his report are available as an appendix. In summary we were £3379 to the good compared to 2016 due to the subscription increase and outgoings and incomes were in line with expectations. There were no major financial issues for the coming year (the audience perceptibly breathed a sigh of relief at this statement). Ian did pose the question to the membership, what is the plan going forward? Ian would be standing down at this AGM and Tim Holmes (Glos) would be taking over.

7. Membership Officer. John, in his other role, reported that membership remains fairly constant at just over the 1000 mark. Last year we had 1047 members (not 1051) at the time of the AGM, of which 189 did not renew and 4 died. We lost 25 of these members when the Ryedale and North Yorkshire Region withdrew from the BWA and it is possible that we lost a few members due to the increase in membership fees to £25.

We have 170 new members, giving us a net total on 31st May of 1034, 13 down on last year.

Retention of new members is slightly better with the loss after 1 year being about the same at 25% but longer term retention after two years slightly better with a 5% drop in lost members to 48%, but this only equates to 10 members.

We currently have 10 overseas members and these are included in the total of 1034.

Publicity Officer's report. Vince O'Donnell advised that he would be standing down at this AGM. He did report on the difficulties he had had on getting information for publicity purposes from the regions. Cooperation between the Editor, Webmaster and Publicity Officer needs to be improved. At this time the post remains vacant. Any offers of help from all regions would be warmly welcomed.

Regional Liaison. Eileen Walker thanked all the regional leaders in their sterling efforts and for keeping her informed of changes within their organisations. We currently have 31 regions the latest being South Dorset which meets at Weymouth under the leadership of David Whiddett. Copies of the latest Regional Directory (May 2017) were made available to regional leaders present and would be sent to those absent on the day. **The directory is full of excellent contact and other regional details.**

Gazette Editor. Jason was unavailable at the meeting. He apologised for the late delivery of the Spring Gazette (Vol 3, Issue 16). A misunderstanding with the printer over issue dates caused the difficulty, hopefully a one off event.

Web Manager's report. Graeme Murray advised that this year we have averaged 240 enquiries via the website and a further 20 via the phone. These enquiries cover the value of carvings, very difficult advice to give, trees available (free or chargeable) and commissions.

We are averaging 35,000 visits to our website with just under 50% being from tablets and smartphones. Our website is getting old, predating the surge of mobile devices. We have plans in motion to redesign the website to support this new technology.

8. **Election of Officers.** The positions of Secretary (Ken Veal) and Treasurer (Tim Holmes) were filled by the only candidates so no voting was required. There were 3 applications for the position of Chairman, Derek Drain (Essex), Rod Eckford (N. Wales) and Richard Waite (Glos). Due to the late arrival of the Gazette, together with postal voting forms the deadline for voting was reset at 31st May 2017. Accordingly the new chairman will be elected by a majority (postal or e mail + membership number) vote and announced in June. An e mail to all regions was posted promptly after the meeting to spread the word.

9. **Member's proposals.** There were none.

10. **National Council Proposals.** To bring the Constitution up to date (latest version 16th March 2017 on website) several amendments were proposed. Amendment 1.c.4 ***The BWA requires that all Members less than 16 years of age must have a designated responsible adult in attendance with them at all times. This may be a parent, family relative, legal guardian or other approved person with written permission.*** This amendment will be included following the postal voting.

A second administrative proposal was ***to add the role of Web site manager to the National Council.*** This will be included following the postal voting.

There was a proposal to remove para 6.j. This amendment would simplify the arrangements that regions have for choosing a regional chairman, if one was required.

Proposed: Brenda Simpson Seconded: Ken Veal

The vote was unanimous with no abstentions. *Para 6.j was deleted.*

11. Membership fees and capitation will remain as for 2016. Annual subscriptions of £25/member (£17 for second member at the same address) will fall due on 1st June 2017. Capitation will be assessed as £10/member as of 30th June 2017.

12. Appointment of auditors. Ian Ford (outgoing Treasurer) agreed to and will be appointed to this role for 2017/2018.

13. AGM arrangements for 2018. S Wales and W Midlands indicated an interest in taking this up. The National Memorial Arboretum (repeat) was

suggested as being a very good “central” venue. An invitation will be put out to all regions for hosting the 2018 meeting.

At this juncture the AGM closed (round about 4.35 pm, as I was busy writing at the time!) and the meeting was thrown open to debate.

A question of clarification was raised by Leanne Riley (W. Midlands) concerning the purpose and practice of capitation. Various opinions were put forward but the Chairman acknowledged that this was simply custom and practice and perhaps now some clarification was needed to maintain it.

Richard Waite (Glos) advised that there will be a show at Westonbirt (August bank Holiday week, 2018). An invitation was made to ALL regions to take part, **free of charge**. For details contact Tony Bush (Glos).

At this point there was a (dignified) rush for the exit!!

Ken Veal
BWA National Council Secretary
25.05.2017