

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Norfolk Polish Heritage Group

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 19.00

Walnut Tree House, Main Road, North Tuddenham NR20 3HE

### PRESENT

John Cotton (Committee member) (JC), Melvin Denny (Committee member) (MD), Richard Minkler (Secretary) (RM), Adrian O'dell (AOD) (Chair), Philip Ridge (Committee member) (PR), Tina Shepherd (Treasurer) (TS)

### APOLOGIES

None

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM (02/05/2019)

There were no matters arising and the Minutes were approved.

### CHAIR'S REPORT (AOD)

AOD began with the hope that our Friends and Supporters and their families were safe and well following such a difficult year but he was optimistic that the year ahead would allow the NPHG to return to some of the normality we enjoyed before March 2020.

Because of continuing Covid-19 restrictions, this year's AGM was being held with only members of the Management Committee in attendance.

The fifth year since our inauguration in April 2016 passed without any of the events for which we are well-known although there was some activity in the following areas:

#### Archive Project

We were unable to add to our collection of case studies but we have been working with the Norfolk Record Office which has established the "Community Archives: Skills, Support and Sustainability project" (CASSSP). This is a National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported project which began in March 2020 and is due to run until March 2022. As its name suggests, the goals of this project are to:

*Provide training to Norfolk's community archive and heritage groups that allows them to develop the skills used by professional archivists.*

*Give the groups professional support and resources for their collections and the projects they are working on.*

*Help the groups preserve their collections for the future and make them accessible on an ongoing basis.*

*Increase the groups' confidence with regards to collecting, managing and exhibiting archive material.*

Although we have submitted our case study documents and images to the Norfolk Record Office (generally in digital format) we have yet to catalogue the individual items so that they become accessible to a wider audience. We hope to start doing that in the weeks ahead.

#### Polish Conversation Group

We have managed to continue this friendly group for beginners and intermediates using Zoom, which has worked well with currently just four participants and one tutor. The group meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month and there is no charge for sessions online. We anticipate that the group will continue and we may wish to have a mix of online and physical involvement as restrictions are eased. We would like to thank Tessa Black for her continued dedication as the tutor to the Conversation Group.

#### Events in 2020

We were able to hold two events before lockdown came into effect on March 23rd 2020.

January 2020 – Polish Cookery Demonstration – A delightful afternoon learning how to make and then taste delicious Polish fare: Pierogi (dumplings), Kapusta Kiszona (Sauerkraut), Rye Sourdough bread.

March 2020 – “Norfolk Poles and stories from the NPHG Archive Project” & Polish Folk-Art Display – A talk and presentation at the NRO combined with a fascinating display of traditional Polish crafts.

End of Chair's Report

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#### Treasurer's report

TS was happy to say that the Group remains in a sound and stable financial position although there was no income during the year as no events were held.

#### NPHG PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT 2020-2021

Opening Balance 01/04/2020	4148.75		
	Income	Expenditure	Variance
Events			
Friends fees			
Conversation Group		299.76	-299.76
Archive Project		8.00	-8.00
Website & Publicity		249.55	-259.55
Miscellaneous		242.30	-242.30
Totals	0.00	799.61	-799.61

### Election of Officers and Committee Members

The following offered themselves for re-election and their election was unanimously agreed.

#### Officers

Chair: Adrian Żółkowski-O'dell

Secretary: Richard Minkler

Treasurer: Walentyna Shepherd

#### Committee Members

John Cotton

Melvin Denny

Philip Ridge

#### Archive Project

JC told the meeting about the work he had been doing at a primary school for autistic children in south Norfolk. He was responsible for sorting out many boxes of old records into different categories and then into alphabetical and chronological order. Although JC believed it was quite a basic exercise, AOD felt it was a valuable learning experience for the cataloguing work we need to do for the NPHG Archive Project. JC has offered to help with that but currently he does not have access to a PC or laptop, which is vital, Fortunately, we have been told by CASSSP that they will be able buy a laptop for the NPHG from money available from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, so we will apply for a device and then JC and AOD will liaise to take things forward.

#### Polish Conversation Group

PR then discussed aspects of the group. The advanced speakers started sessions well but, because he had to discontinue his involvement because of health issues, there was not enough impetus for them to carry on. PR had been responsible for organizing the move from physical to online sessions which have been very successful with a mix of intermediate pupils and beginners. We have one absolute beginner, Stephen Thomson, who has shown a great deal of enthusiasm and commitment. Tessa Black (TB) sets regular homework which emphasizes the importance of grammar. There was a suggestion that we should revert to physical sessions as soon as possible but AOD had the feeling that TB likes the online method; it eliminates the need for a +- 70-mile round trip from her home for which the group pays mileage. Perhaps we might have a blend of online and physical sessions in future.

#### Friends of the NPHG

PR raised the question about subscriptions and why we had not asked for renewals. RM felt that it was a correct decision not to ask for subs during the pandemic. The committee felt that once we organize our next event, we should ask Friends to renew their membership. It was felt that people wanted to contribute to the group and did not consider if they were "getting their money's worth".

### Future events

After June 21<sup>st</sup> it was felt that we should organize the following events which had been scheduled for 2020:

1. Guided tour of Norwich with pub quiz – Sunday in July
2. Polish Film Festival at Cinemas City – Sunday in October

AOD will re-contact Cinema City to determine if they will (once again) give us free hire of the venue. Both the above ideas will depend entirely on the regulations in force at the time and the mood of the nation.

MD proposed that the first event should be something held outdoors, where attendees would feel safer. He suggested it be held in AOD's garden and would include a Polish band and Polish barbecue. This idea was met enthusiastically by the committee and MD and TS agreed to look for a band and RM would take charge of the cooking. A suggested timing would be July or early September (AOD has a large charity event and family commitment in August). The whole event would be branded as a re-launch.

### AOB

MD asked to know the status of our Registered Charity application. AOD and RM told the committee that after a lot of preparation and effort, our preliminary application had been returned by the Charities Commission as incomplete and that we had not had the time nor the inclination to re-work the application. Although being a registered charity has significant benefits, particularly when looking for funding, it was not felt necessary for the NPHG for the time being.

AOD reported on Klaudia James' health situation by reading an email from Tessa Black. Following an operation in March, Klaudia is recuperating at home and, although in some pain, she is in positive spirits. The committee agreed to sending her some flowers with a goodwill message from the NPHG. AOD will organize that.

MD suggested that we need to be more active on our Facebook pages: topics that we might add regularly are our Archive case studies and details about our planned events.

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At the close of the AGM, committee members enjoyed a Polish supper of bigos and cernik prepared by Jane O'dell. Our thanks go to her for a delicious meal.

It was good to be together again as a group and to be able see smiling faces and lots of laughter.