



The Black Country Society

Annual General Meeting

Time and date: 7:30, 26th March 2025.

Location: Bilston Town Hall and virtually on Zoom.

Due to technical issues, online attendees were only able to vote for the selection of the new executive committee – item 6, below. We apologise for this situation, and will ensure matters are resolved in readiness for next year's AGM.

1. The chair Malcolm Dick welcomed members to the meeting.
 - a) Malcolm Dick, gave an overview of the proceedings and indicated he had received no apologies from any committee members.
 - b) Apologies were received from the following BCS members: Barbara and Richard Beadman, Christine Brown, John Hale, Gloria Jenkins, Ward Jones and Stephen Wycherley.
 - c) The total number present at the AGM was **32** virtual and **48** in-person.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 18th March 2024
These were accepted as a correct record.

3. Matters arising from the previous minutes.
There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Annual Report.

The chairman's annual report was received. It was noted that the BCS committee provides good leadership and management of the BCS and 'The Blackcountryman' continues to be a high-quality magazine. The cost of producing the magazine has increased significantly. The Chairman said that the Committee structure should be changed. There should be an executive committee of active members who can attend meetings regularly, and in addition Ambassadors who can support the BCS in other ways.

5. Treasurers Annual Report and appointment of Auditors.

The treasurer presented her report. She reported a loss of £7,660 in 2024. Membership income was £12,000. The cost of producing 'The Blackcountryman' was approximately £19,000. There are other costs which have had an impact on the overall balance.

ADB were appointed as the auditors for a further year.

There were no questions from members on either reports.

6. Election of officers.

The following were elected *en bloc*:

Executive committee: Malcolm Dick (Chairman), Keith Robinson (Vice-chairman), Quintin Watt (Secretary), Kathy Knight (Treasurer.), Chris Baker (Digital & Stock), Julie Potts (Membership), Emma Purshouse (Magazine Editor).

In Favour **40 (26 online)** - Against **0** - Abstentions **0**.

Other committee members: Andrew Homer (Digital Support), Geoff Taylor-Smith (Minutes), Michael Thompson (Programme Sect.), Steve Pottinger (Book Sales) and Ian Bott (Raffle).

In Favour **40** - Against **0** - Abstentions **0**.

7. Resolutions requiring Members support:

i. 'The future of the 'Black Country Society,' proposal **a.**, regarding the activities of the society was approved by the majority of the members physically present at the meeting. QW and MD explained the rationale behind this recommendation. It was noted that the programme of virtual events will continue as present.

In Favour **27** - Against **11** - Abstentions **2**.

ii. 'The future of the 'Black Country Society,' proposal **b.**, regarding the organisation of the committee, was approved by the majority of the members physically present at the meeting.

In Favour **32** - Against **1** - Abstentions **4**.

iii. 'The future of the 'Black Country Society,' proposal **c.**, regarding recommended price increases were approved. Namely, each category of membership subscription will increase by £5 from 1 June 2025, and members will be charged £3 to attend events.

In Favour **35** - Against **1** - Abstentions **0**.

8. Any Other Business

Questions focused on cost-cutting suggestions, such as whether the magazine could be provided online for those who preferred an electronic copy. It was agreed that this would be considered at the next committee meeting. Currently copies are already available on line, although most members prefer a hard copy. The issue of venues was also raised, and MD asked the membership for good suggestions. He emphasised the committee were currently active in this endeavour. In response to another question, QW reiterated the principles behind the BCS reducing the number of meetings. He explained the unique selling point of a regional society, like the BCS, and how it could not compete for attendances with established local history societies. Instead of hosting monthly talks, the BCS would organise fewer, but more impactful events – such as an all-day local history fair. MD added that the BCS hoped to collaborate on projects with other organisations in the region. However, the society could only move forward if it was prepared to change and enjoyed the support of a strong and active committee. He appealed for anyone with such an interest to make contact with himself or QW.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm