



The Falkland Society

Scottish Registered Charity SC017201

www.falklandsociety.org.uk

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Held at The Stables, Falkland Estate, and online via Zoom, 13 March 2024

This AGM started about 8 p.m. following on (after a short break) from the Falkland Society monthly meeting, addressed by Catherine, Lady Erskine, on the revival of the Stables and Walled Garden of the Cambo Estate.

Present:

- Peter Burman – Chair
- John Smith – Vice Chair
- Ross Burgess – Secretary
- Robeena Dhar – Treasurer
- Alan Graham – Chair of Publications Committee & Acting Archivist
- Marietta Crichton Stuart (via Zoom)
- 25 further members and supporters in the room and 16 on Zoom.

Minutes of last AGM (September 2022)

The Chair commented that in previous years the AGM had got later and later, but the Committee had now decided that since our Society's year coincides with the calendar year the AGM should revert to March, giving time for the accounts to be prepared. The minutes had been made available online,¹ and copies were available at the meeting. It was proposed by Alan Graham and seconded by John Smith that they be taken as read. This was agreed by the meeting.

Annual Report for 2023

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2023 was distributed to those present and had been made available online.²

Robeena Dhar, presenting the accounts, noted that we had made a slight surplus over the year, but were expecting increased expenditure in the coming year, for instance future speakers might ask to be paid (and one had asked for a donation to charity), and we may need to pay in future for web hosting and a contribution to the Zoom subscription. We therefore need to increase the number of people paying membership subscriptions

¹ <https://www.falklandsociety.org.uk/docs/AGM-minutes-14September2022.pdf>

² <https://www.falklandsociety.org.uk/docs/FalklandSocietyAnnualReport2023.pdf>

(currently about 40, although the number of people receiving the monthly Newsletters is over 300).

The Chair explained that we were moving to a new definition of our aims:

- *The Falkland Society exists to promote knowledge and understanding of the archaeological, architectural, historic and artistic heritage, past and present, of Falkland and its wider context in Fife and Scotland.*

We had had fascinating lectures/talks from many distinguished speakers, beginning the season with a talk from Sarah Brown, Fife resident with her husband, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Alan Graham announced that following the successful publication in 2020 of the 540-page *Falkland and its People 1901–1913* the Publications Sub-Committee was currently working on two books which will be presented in a similar style, one on the Victorian era, the other on the First World War and its aftermath. There would also be a new edition of *The Falkland Guide*.

It was proposed by John Smith and seconded by Alan Graham that the Annual Report be adopted by the meeting; This was approved by an overwhelming majority. The Annual Report will now be submitted to OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator).

Questions to the Committee and Office Bearers

Rod Crawford commented that the aims ought to be expanded to cover environmental issues. The Chair agreed, pointing out that several of our speakers during the past year had addressed environmental issues.

Rod also suggested that we should hold more meetings in person, not by Zoom only. The Committee will consider this, taking into account the experience of other comparable organisations.

Election of Committee and Office Bearers

The existing Committee and Office Bearers offered themselves for re-election and committed themselves in principle to serve until the next AGM in March 2025. The plan would be to recruit additional Committee members who could be ready to take over one or more of the Office Bearer roles next year: with this thought in mind the Committee had recently prepared role descriptions.³

It was proposed by Lars Christiansen and seconded by [name not recorded] that the existing Committee and office Bearers should all be re-elected, and this was agreed overwhelmingly by the meeting.⁴

³ <https://falklandsociety.org.uk/docs/RoleSpecifications.pdf>

⁴ Strictly speaking, according to the Constitution, the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer plus two further Committee members were elected, with one further Committee member regarded as co-opted.

Announcements

Archive and Artefacts: the Committee has come to the conclusion that it has something of a 'crisis in custodianship'. Archives ideally need professional curation and proper conditions of relative humidity and security. Alan Graham has recorded what is in our Archives, and the Committee will enter into a period of consultation as to what Options there might be and their pros and cons. In the long term one possibility might be to deposit our archives and artefacts with the OnFife Collections Centre at Bankhead, Glenrothes, which already holds the Falkland Provost's Chain and is open to researchers. Another possibility is the Special Collections of the University of St Andrews which already holds on deposit the Minutes (and for all we know other historic documents) relating to the former Falkland Burgh Council.

Rod Crawford strongly urged that the Archive and Artefacts should be kept within the village, available to local people. His view was noted, but there is no obviously suitable long-term location or sufficient people resources.

Rod also suggested that there should be a leaflet explaining the items kept in the display cabinet in the entrance to the Library. This was noted; however, the items in question, known as "Falkland Regalia" do not belong to the Society: they are "Common Good" items owned by Fife Council; custodianship of them was transferred from the Council to the National Trust for Scotland in 1975 and subsequently to the Falkland Community Development Trust.

Falkland Archives Day: The Committee meeting two days before the AGM had discussed the possibility of holding a Falkland Archives Day during the summer, including an interpreted display of some of our Archive and Artefacts, as part of an exhibition about the History of Falkland, to be held in the Parish Church, which is now officially due for closure.

Several representatives of the Society had attended a meeting organised by Rev. Susan Thorburn, the Church of Scotland's Mission Support Worker for the district, about the future of the building, when a period of experimentation was called for. The Society will continue to take a keen interest in developments affecting the future of the building.

Close of meeting

Lars Christiansen warmly congratulated the Chair, Secretary and Committee for all they had done over the years to organise interesting and enjoyable meetings, and especially the year that we are now celebrating through our AGM.

Peter Burman, Chair, Ross Burgess, Secretary