BLHA Bedfordshire Local History Association

Thirtieth Annual General Meeting
of The Bedfordshire Local History Association will be on
Saturday 28th June 2025 at 9.30 am
at Colmworth Village Hall, Church Road, Colmworth, Bedford MK44 2JX

There is no limit to the number of members from member Societies who may attend the AGM, but only two members from each Society may vote.

The documents included here are for items **2**, **4** and **5** of the BLHA AGM and are highlighted below in **bold**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes of the Twenty-Ninth Annual General Meeting, held on 22nd June 2024

3. Matters arising

4. Chairman's Report 2024-2025

5. Treasurer's Report 2024-2025

6. Election of Chairman, Officers and Committee

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Association's accounts

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of Next Year's AGM and Conference

Bedfordshire Local History Association

Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting held at
Cedars Upper School, Mentmore Road, Linslade, Leighton Buzzard LU7 2AE
Saturday 22nd June 2024 at 9.30 am

Present: 61 delegates.

1 Apologies for Absence

Stella Gibbs (Roxton and District Local History Group)
Sarah Wright (Ampthill & District Preservation Society)

2 Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual General Meeting held on 22nd June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated and copies were available in the hall.

Acceptance was proposed by Paul Brown and Bob Ricketts.
The minutes were approved and signed.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Chairman's Reports 2023-2024

Copies of the Chairman's report were available in the hall, and included below.

First, I would like to offer you all a warm welcome to the 2024 Bedfordshire Local History Association AGM and Conference in this, the Association's 31st year. Thank you to Leighton Buzzard & District Archaeological and Historical Society who are hosting the event today.

A limited conference last year and was hosted by Potton History Society. The theme was 'Local Archives in Bedfordshire - An Overlooked Resource'. There were 39 delegates attending, representing 18 local societies. The conference included a visit to the Potton Archive where the many aspects of retrieval, preservation and cataloguing were discussed. A questionnaire was used to analyse if/how other member societies were addressing their archiving of research materials and artefacts collected from their area.

The Autumn 2023 Event was held at Chester House Estate, Irchester. A total of 12 members attended representing 5 BLHA member societies. The visit included a guided tour of the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre, a visit to the adjacent, active dig site which forms part of the extended Irchester Roman town and a tour of the newly opened Museum.

The Spring 2024 Event has recently been held at Stotfold Mill. The event was attended by 17 members representing 7 member societies. The visit over three floors included a guided tour of the complete milling process. This was followed by a review of their archive which clearly documents the recovery of the mill from a fire damaged ruin to a

working heritage site.

This year saw a National Award being given to Stuart Antrobus by Dr Kate Thompson, Vice President of BALH.

Membership of the Association has remained steady[1] during this last year and we were able to strengthen the numbers on the committee. We have put in a substantial amount of effort into

(a) Developing a new strategy for the Association.

(b) Preparing the groundwork for new projects to further develop and implement this new strategy.

Please do come along to the BLHA table here at the conference to get more details and contribute to these initiatives.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for their work during this last year; Clive Makin, the Secretary; Sandra Peacock, the Treasurer; Ted Martin, HIB Journal Editor; Bob Ricketts; Colin West; Lynn Manning; Mollie Foster and Pamela Birch (ex-officio) Bedfordshire Archives. Thanks also to Liz, Clive's wife who maintains our website and has made many design changes over the last year to improve the user-friendliness of the site.

[1] Losing Harlington Society, gaining Moot Hall and 6 individual members.

Many of the committee attended the recent funeral of Mike Turner who stepped down from our committee a year ago. A full description of Mike's contribution will appear in a future release of HIB.

Des Hoar, Chairman 22nd June 2024

Acceptance of the Chairman's Report was proposed by George Howe and Pamela Birch.

The Chairman's report was followed by a five-slide presentation on the BLHA Strategic Review.

BLHA Bedfordshire Local History Association

Strategic Review

Why New Strategy now?

- .....from the concerns that the numbers of members in our Societies was decreasing as a direct result of the Covid pandemic and the consequent realisation that the average age of our membership was inevitably going to lead to a decline in numbers. This would possible manifest itself in
  - The Societies struggling to appoint sufficient committee members.
  - Attendances at Society events would decline.
  - Support to BLHA events and the Conference would fall.

- .....examine how BLHA
  - could assist with Supporting Societies
  - could enhance their own programme to attract younger members
  - remains an effective network for its member societies

Proposed way forward

.....by developing our strategic goals so we can tailor the next programme of activities and agree the timelines/resources for their implementation.

It is envisaged that we will appoint working groups to devise a plan for each of the new initiatives and this strategy document will provide the framework to help those groups plan the implementation of the new activity.

Initiatives.....

- So far, the Strategic goals/initiatives we have identified are:
  - Enhance BLHA Committee to provide new ideas and resources to develop and implement this strategy.
  - Encourage greater collaboration between Member Societies.
  - Encourage greater collaboration between BLHA and other Heritage groups in Bedfordshire.
  - Encourage greater collaboration between BLHA and the Associations from neighbouring Counties – this should lead to the possibility of joint meetings and eventually to across-county projects at Society level.
  - Explore new initiatives based on the experience of neighbouring counties e.g., Award Schemes, History Fairs etc.
  - Encourage the greater involvement of younger people through collaboration with educational organisations e.g., Schools, Colleges.

Initiatives.....

- Continued....
  - Ensure that BLHA has the appropriate IT tools/skills to support these new initiatives.
  - Ensure BLHA has a sound financial policy to fund these initiatives including the necessary sponsorship/grants. We need to identify what locations/resources and funds are available to support any part of the strategy.
  - Ensure that BLHA has the process/resources to help support struggling Societies.
  - Ensure BLHA has the resources to establish /support any workshops that Member Societies have requested.
  - To comply with our insurance requirements we need to develop the skills/tools needed to apply Risk Assessments to future activities.
  - Provide Speaker List to assist programme coordinators
  - Your idea or your response....let us know by commenting on the sheet below.....

- This list is not, as yet, in any priority order nor in timeline order. It is also recognised that a single new initiative may address more than one goal e.g. galvanising different goals as different Categories within an Award scheme.

5 Treasurer's Report 2023-2024

1. No unusual movements in the Accounts for this financial year.

2. Membership has gained a few single members, however four single members have not paid for the second year running despite reminders and therefore I suggest we can consider that they no longer wish to be members of the Association.

3. Insurance costs remain the same as do the website costs.

4. Admin costs include stationery and printing costs for the AGM.

5. Both the Heritage Walk at Woburn and the Stotfold Mill events were well attended. Some monies for the Stotfold Mill event will come into the 2024/2025 financial year.

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Accounts Year End 31st March 2024

	RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
	2023-24	**2022-23**	**2023-24**	**2022-23**
Subscriptions	455.00	470.00		
Stannard Books		60.00		
Events:				
Tempsford		160.00		150.00
Woburn (Heritage Walk)	87.50	256.50	235.00	
Stotfold Mill	175.00			
Committee inc a/c t/frs				
Website			158.32	143.93
Postage			4.20	37.03
Insurance			75.00	75.00
Admin			189.45	77.05
	717.50	**946.50**	**661.97**	**483.01**

Open balance on Treasurer's a/c	2,924.26
Surplus/deficit for year 2023/2024	55.53
Balance at Year End 31st March 2024	**2,979.79**

Represented by: Lloyds Bank Treasurer's Account 2,924.26

Working Total £2,979.79

Hon Treasurer ..... Date .....

Chair ..... Date .....

I have examined the Accounts of the Bedfordshire Local History Association shown above which are the responsibility of the Committee of the Association to prepare, in my opinion the Accounts give a true and fair view,as shown by the books and vouchers presented to me and information and explanations given, of the Balance of Funds as at 31st March 2024 and of the receipts and payments for year ended on that date.

Signed ..... Date 10th JUNE 2024

Name ..... J M SHIPMAN

Sandra Peacock, Honorary Treasurer 22nd June 2024

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Kevan Fadden and Paul Brown.

6 Election of Chairman, Officers and Committee

During the year, Mollie Foster and Claire Sowah have stood down from the committee.

Chairman & Officers

Des Hoar - proposed by June Barnes and seconded by Colin Scott

Honorary Treasurer

No nomination

Honorary Secretary

No nomination

Committee

Clive Makin* – proposed by Ann Cassidy and Ivor Edwards
Lynn Manning – proposed by Colin West and seconded by Janet Lawrence
Ted Martin (HIB Editor) – proposed by John Shipman and seconded by Rowena Wolfe
Sandra Peacock* – proposed by Felicity Brimblecombe and seconded by
Chris Brimblecombe
Bob Ricketts – proposed by Pamela Birch and seconded by Clive Makin
Colin West – proposed by Lynn Manning and seconded by Claire Sowah

Pamela Birch, Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service Representative (ex officio)

*Both Sandra and Clive have served 5 year terms as officers within the committee, so are ineligible to stand again. However, they are willing to be co-opted into these posts should they be elected to the committee.

It was proposed by George Howe and seconded by Quentin Palmer that the present committee be re-elected en bloc.

7 Appointment of Independent Examiner of the Association's Accounts

John Shipman was thanked for examining the Association's accounts and was put forward for appointment for the 2024-2025 year.

Proposed by Bob Ricketts and seconded by Richard Morgan.

8 Any Other Business

George Howe – Thanked the BLHA Committee for their work and developing the new strategy, which includes collaboration between groups, something one of Potton's founder members, Norman Parry would have been very pleased to see.

9 Date of next year's AGM and Conference

Date and venue to be advised.

The meeting closed at 9.58 am

Confirmed as an accurate record

Chairman: ……..…….…….…….

Date: …….

22nd June 2024

Chairman's Report 2024-2025

First, I would like to offer you all a warm welcome to the 2025 Bedfordshire Local History Association AGM and Conference. Thank you to Colmworth and Neighbours History Society who are hosting the event today.

Last year's conference was held in Leighton Buzzard and the theme was 'Leighton Buzzard and Linslade through the Ages'. We can all remember the dual presentation on the WW2 secret headquarters known as Q Central and how it was regularly camouflaged to avoid detection.

I took the opportunity to talk about your committee's new strategy to address issues partly caused by the Covid pandemic. I can report on several of those initiatives today as I reflect on the mixed fortunes of the past year.

On one hand we have seen the demise of two of our member societies. The group at Harlington was formally closed. Management of the closure was very professional and their resources have been properly allocated to our county Archive and our accounts will show that they have transferred their remaining funds to BLHA. The group at Toddington, which has been inactive for some time, is also going through the closure process. We are sad to lose them both and thank their committees for all their previous work. We do hope that the new toolkit we have prepared will support any society who in the future may struggle to manage either committee membership or their programme of activities.

Also, many of you will have heard that Bedfordshire Historical Record Society have a meeting this coming September to discuss the closure of that Society.

On the other hand we have seen some impressive steps forward as part of our new strategic programme. We have seen record numbers attend our Autumn event when 32 members visited Turvey House and All Saints Church.

Our recent Spring Event was a visit to Panacea Museum when 13 members attended. The Museum tells the story of the Panacea Society, a religious community based in Bedford for 90 years, who hold Joanna' Southcott's Box, a curious icon of inter-war Britain.

During the year we have promoted several new initiatives; there has been substantial interaction with neighbouring counties and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Associations are coming together to host a regional conference on behalf of the national body, the British Association for Local History. That event is scheduled for October 2025 and will be held in Barton-Le-Clay. The title will be 'Crossing Counties: Transport in Herts, Beds and Bucks'.

Our most important new event was the inaugural Bedfordshire Heritage Awards which were hosted in Bedford in January. There were 17 entries over 4 classes and we were pleased to see winners from across the county.

- Best Book was won by Friends of the Bedford Cemetery
- Best Journal was won by Bedford Architectural, Archaeological & Local History Society
- Best Project was won for an enactment of the Fall of Bedford Castle
- Best Website was won by Turvey History Society

We can announce that the next qualifying period for this biennial award scheme is April 2024 through to April 2026 and we are planning to add new classes for ‘school/college projects’ and ‘collaborative projects involving more than one society’. The award ceremony will be in January 2027. Please do look at the display boards at this conference to see fuller details of all entries.

We have also seen our new Speaker Directory continue to grow and that our society programme coordinators are making good use of it.

The total membership of the Association has remained fairly steady. The Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust have approached the BLHA and the Hertfordshire Association regarding membership and a collaboration.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for their work during this last year; Clive Makin, the Secretary; Sandra Peacock, the Treasurer; Ted Martin, HIB Journal Editor; Bob Ricketts who led the Award Scheme; Colin West; Lynn Manning, and Pamela Birch (ex-officio) Bedfordshire Archives. We are looking to increase the committee so please consider joining us.

Thanks also to Liz, Clive’s wife, who maintains our website and has again made many design changes over the last year to improve the user-friendliness of the site.

Des Hoar, Chairman 28th June 2025

Treasurer's Report 2024-2025

1. Membership numbers have remained fairly static this year. Subscriptions are showing a fall but this is due to the bank taking standing order amounts out mainly in April 2025 this year.

2. Harlington Heritage Trust closed this year and they donated their residual funds to the BLHA.

3. Insurance and website costs have not varied.

4. Admin costs included the stationery and printing costs for last year's AGM.
   The only other cost was associated with the Awards ceremony. This is to be a bi-yearly event.

5. The two events held this year were well attended. The residual from last year's event, Stotfold Mill are shown in the Accounts and the monies to the Panacea Museum will show in next year's Accounts.

BEDFORDSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Accounts Year end 31st March 2025

	RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS	
	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24
Subscriptions	380.00	455.00		
Stannard Books	22.00			
Events:				
Woburn Heritage Walk		87.50		235.00
Stotfold Mill	121.50	175.00	255.00	
Turvey	340.00		330.00	
Panacea	40.00			
Awards			324.65	
Committee inc a/c t/frs				
Website			187.12	158.32
Postage				4.20
Insurance			75.00	75.00
Admin			349.77	189.45
Harlington Heritage Trust	2,355.28			
	3,258.78	**717.50**	**1521.54**	**661.97**

Open balance on Treasure's a/c	2,979.79
Surplus/deficit for year 2024/2025	1,737.24
Balance at Year End 31st March 2025	**4,717.03**

Represented by: Lloyds Bank Treasure's Account £2979.79

Working Total 4,717.03

Hon Treasurer ..... Date .....

Chair ..... Date .....

I have examined the Accounts of the Bedfordshire Local History Association shown above which are the responsibility of the Committee of the Association to prepare, in my opinion the Accounts give a true and fair view,as shown by the books and vouchers presented to me and information aand explanations given, of the Balance of Funds as at 31st March 2025 and of the receipts and payments for year ended on that date.

Signed ..... Date .....

Name .....

Sandra Peacock, Honorary Treasurer 28th June 2025