

AGM MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2023

Present: 24 Members and 3 visitors.

Apologies: Jane Taylor, Maggie Moorhouse, Pam Baker, Sue Lines, Sarah Ballinger, Jean Vaughan, Liz Sykes, Douglas and Yvonne Faulcolnbridge, Kate and Phil Jones

Sheila then introduced the AGM

1. Minutes of the 2022 AGM (accepted as a true record)
2. There were no matters arising
3. Chairman's Report (accepted)
4. Treasurer's report (accepted). Sue explained that the loss was due to additional expenses incurred on the Jubilee exhibition.
5. Election of Officers. Chairman: Sheila Woolf. Secretary/Treasurer: Sue Crofts. Voted unanimously
6. Committee members. Voted en bloc. Clare Clarke, Lisa Reay, Margaret Wallis, Anthony Bianco, Pete James.
7. AOB. Pam Baker was thanked for all her hard work on various projects, principally the 1921 census and helping Lisa create the Coronation display. She had been presented with an outdoor flower arrangement. Rob Orland had taken over the SHS website and had amalgamated the censuses between 1841 and 1939 so that a simple search could produce all the dates when a person was recorded. Sheila thanked Lisa for all the time she has spent researching material for the Coronation display.
8. Anthony had continued to work on our behalf about the condition of Stare Bridge and had succeeded in obtaining compensation for damage from BBV.
9. Margaret was retiring after having served as Secretary since the Society's formation. Sheila thanked her for all her work and support over the years and, as a token of thanks, she was presented with a huge bouquet.

Sheila then introduced Anne Langley to speak about "Early Allotments in Warwickshire – their contribution to society"

Allotments had had different definitions e.g. to compensate for the loss of common ground rights, small holdings, small gardens, cow pastures, odd corners of fields, town gardens (eg Hill Close in Warwick), odd bits of land near railways. There were also some communal pig clubs. By the end of the C18 there were 5000 plots in Warwickshire, more in the south than the north of the county. During WW2 the 'Dig for Victory' campaign was a huge success. In Southam there were even allotments in air raid shelters. Allotments featured in several *Punch* cartoons. Rules varied e.g. no work was allowed on allotments on Sundays and no picking of produce after 9 am on weekdays.

Allotments certainly encouraged self-sufficiency and excellent yields of fruit and vegetable were usually obtained, which was of great benefit to the unemployed

Most tenants were family men, but some widows rented in their own right, having inherited the plots Anne described some of the tenants. In Coventry, Cash's allocated some allotments in a scheme that lasted for ten years.

Hill Close Warwick was unusual as these were town gardens, small houses with gardens, used for leisure rather than growing food.

Other sites mentioned were Coventry Park Gardens (near the station and still there. Birmingham Guinea Gardens, on the Edgbaston Road, near the Botanic Gardens.

Warwickshire was at the forefront of the allotment movement.

Anne believed that in 1835 Stoneleigh had 2 plots, across the bridge in what was known as Van Dieman's Land. This definitely appears as such on a map of 1923 though was not named before then.

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Thank you from Margaret Wallis.

I am very grateful for the lovely flowers and for the kind words on my retirement as Secretary. I shall miss my role as Secretary but various health issues mean it is no longer feasible for me to fulfil my duties to the standard I wish.

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The April meeting will include a talk about the lives of Millicent Fawcett and her husband, Henry.