

## **Berkswell & District History Group**

### **Statement from the Trustees re the future of the History Group**

Members will be aware from statements at recent meetings and communications from the Trustees that there has been considerable thought given by the Trustees to the future of the Group, and specifically, the sustainability of the programme of monthly, speaker-led meetings. This has (as previously indicated) been prompted by several concerns

1. The number of members of the History group has declined over the past few years and given the age profile of the membership, this seems likely to continue. This is likely to have impact upon the future finances of the group, although it needs to be stressed that the finances as reported to the Trustees are currently in a healthy position
2. There is increasing difficulty in obtaining quality speakers on topics likely to be of interest to members
3. Related to the above, the costs of such speakers are increasing and this again, calls into question the future viability of these events
4. Critically, the organisation of the meeting programme has, for the past few years, almost completely been undertaken by the Group's Chair, Glyn Price. This has been a considerable undertaking, involving not only researching, identifying and liaising with potential speakers, but also logistical and practical work in connection with the venue, refreshments, administration and communication. For understandable personal reasons, Glyn had decided to relinquish these responsibilities with effect from the end of 2017. Without a replacement co-ordinator, it is clear to the Trustees that organising a programme of monthly meetings will not happen. Regrettably, to date no one has been forthcoming to take on this role.

Whilst the first 3 points above call into question the long-term future of holding monthly meetings with a speaker, it is the 4<sup>th</sup> point which has exercised the Trustees specifically. Members, as part of the consultation over these issues have responded with helpful suggestions re the future, including ideas such as holding meetings in Balsall Common rather than Berkswell, holding meetings in the afternoons, and similar. These may have merit in seeking to increase attendance at meetings but unfortunately do not resolve the issue of a successor to the current Chair as co-ordinator of the Programme.

However, it is clear that in the absence from December, of a willing volunteer to co-ordinate them, a programme of monthly meetings for 2018 cannot be organised. Regrettably no such volunteer has come forward or been identified, and therefore the Trustees have decided no programme of monthly meetings can be published for 2018.

In light of this the Trustees propose the following:

- There will not be a programme of monthly meetings with external speakers in 2018
- The History group will remain in existence and will have as its principal function research into the history of the area and its publication and dissemination to the community
- The Trustees plan to hold the Annual General meeting as previously published in January, and to keep the organisation functioning
- Meetings – either 'open' meetings for all the community to attend, or members-only events -will be organised, as and when feasible.
- In 2018 it is envisaged there will be quarterly events, including the AGM in January; an 'open' event on the history of Balsall Common in March to build upon the success of a

similar event held last July; an autumn event to be planned; and a pre-Christmas social event.

- It is envisaged that one of the functions of these meetings will be to report back to members and the wider community on the result of research into local history undertaken by the Group
- In light of these decisions it has been agreed that membership will be continue to be offered to all current members and potential future members, with no membership fee for 2018.
- Members will receive communications about the work undertaken by the group and personal invitations to meetings organised in future, as well as opportunities to contribute to the ongoing work of the History Group.
- The Trustees may make a charge for attendance at future meetings dependent upon the costs involved in the holding of such meetings, and/or the nature of the events
- The Trustees will continue to meet and keep the future of the group under review, and may re-visit these decisions if circumstances change

Note: this decision by the Trustees is in keeping with the current purposes of the History Group as set out in the Constitution of the Group. No change to the constitution of the Group is, in the opinion of the Trustees required.

For information and future reference, the Purposes of the Group are set out below:

## 2 THE PURPOSES OF THE CHARITY ARE:

(1) for the benefit of its members and the general public to better understand the history of the parish of Berkswell and district.

(2) to assist in the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area.

(3) to document and collate such information as has been collected or given so that records and access to records and information is available to all.

(4) to publish or promote such information and to hold meetings for discussion on relevant matters.

(5) to act as a co-ordinating body and to co-operate with local authorities and other statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, charities and any person(s) having aims compatible with those of the B&DHG.

(6) to promote research into subjects or objects associated with or belonging to the B&DHG.

(7) to educate public opinion and to give advice as and when necessary.

**Glyn Price (Chair)**

**Peter Whalley, Jackie Tomnie, David Felthouse, Eric Cooper, Kirsty Hooper, Stephen Gill**

**Trustees of the Berkswell and District History Group**

**December 2017**