



# THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

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## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

**Held on Wednesday 22 September 2021 at 8.00 p.m.**

This took place both online (via Zoom) and in person at Newington Green Meeting House, 39a Newington Green, London, N16 9PR.

The AGM was preceded by a virtual tour, Mary Wollstonecraft and Newington Green (7pm) by Professor Anna Birch. She spoke of her legacy then and now (born 27 April 1759, and died 10 September 1797). She came to Newington Green in 1784 to set up a girls' school, and made connections with the many dissenters in the area. She became Britain's first Feminist and her famous book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 1792 continues to resonate. Anna is a theatre director and academic fascinated by the power of feminist performance to produce new ways of thinking. Mary Wollstonecraft lived and worked near where Anna lives inspiring numerous performance and film events worldwide produced by her company Fragments & Monuments.

Present: Trustees - Nick Perry, Wendy Forrest, Julia Lafferty, Ray Blackburn, Monica Blake, and Tony Gillett; and members: Anne Blackburn, Kate Starling, Christiana Watson, Dan Brown, Femi Santos, Fiona Darbyshire, Nicholas Hanna, June Harben, Mary Sewell, Chris Sansom, Lisa Haywood, Lisa Shell, Liz Robinson, Robert O'Dell, Sue Perks, Sue Glanville, Laurie Elks [who stood down as trustee prior to AGM] and Susan Doe in the audience; and Colin Brooking, Irene Stratton, Justin More, Mark Douglas, Mary Leaming, Melissa Ford, Quintin Watt, Rosie Barker, Sharon Meager, Sian Batchelder, Susan Armitage, Tim Haines, June Lausch, Kate Van Haeften and Emma Sangster on Zoom. Also, several Non-members also watched at least part of the Meeting on Zoom.

Agenda Items	Discussions and Decisions
1. Apologies for Absence/ Announcement.	Apologies were received from: Independent Financial Examiner - Dave Harris; Sean Gubbins, Robert Whytehead and Panda Mery (members)
2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM	The Minutes of the previous AGM held on 16 September 2020 were approved, proposed by Wendy Forrest and seconded by Monica Blake.
3. Annual Report of the Executive Committee	Nick Perry, Chair of the Trustees, presented the report for the year ended 31 March 2021. He reported that Lisa Shell had resigned at the last AGM, Laurie Elks during the year and he and Monica Blake were retiring at this AGM; thus the Society was keen to recruit new Trustees, and was pleased to have already received a number of responses. There has been no change to what the Society does, but due to Covid changes in how, most notably all events prior to the AGM have been virtual. Membership is at its highest level for 8 years at 261, of whom 57 are life members which means the Society does not receive any ongoing contribution from them. Fortunately many of them have responded generously to appeals for donations. The Society's "existential" project to engage members and the wider public to discuss the future shape of the Society remains on hold. Once reinstated it will seek to capture what the Society means to people and talk about what the Society could and should be. The trustees would be grateful for any suggestions or offers of practical help. There is now a library of our virtual tours on YouTube and these have drawn in hundreds of viewers, far more than could ever attend in person. He thanked Ray

	<p>Blackburn and Laurie (who will continue to be involved even though no longer a Trustee) for their success. Ray added that whilst our reach is now far wider he felt that something was missing when people were not together in person, and he was keen to get any feedback on the different options.</p> <p>The biggest achievement of the year was our publication (jointly with <i>Hackney History</i> - formerly the Friends of Hackney Archives) <i>Women from Hackney's History</i>. The book has been researched, written, illustrated and designed entirely by women from Hackney – all volunteers and many with close relationships to The Society and/or Hackney History. The only costs for the book were the printing and listing (ISBN) – all other materials (including pictures) and effort were donated to the project and we are immensely grateful to the organizations, institutions and individuals involved. We're grateful to everyone involved. We made a modest profit quite rapidly and had no reason to call on the cost-sharing arrangement with Hackney History in order to settle the printing bill. Nonetheless, we came to an agreement with <i>Hackney History</i> on how to share the profits in the next financial year. Wendy Forrest was thanked for her leading role in the project.</p> <p>Spaces continue to be well received and Nick thanked Monica Blake who has edited the magazine for many years.</p> <p>Our website needs updating, we have the funding but we have not been able to recruit a volunteer to manage the process. The micro-site <a href="http://hackneysociety.org/health">hackneysociety.org/health</a> remains mothballed; however <a href="http://lovelocallandmarks.org">lovelocallandmarks.org</a> has been taken offline. The information it contained is held by the Society and the Council and it is available on the Internet Archive project. The data has all been transferred to the Layers of London website by <i>Hackney History</i>.</p> <p>Our <i>Spacelets</i> email newsletter has 1,555 subscribers, a near doubling of subscribers over the year – mainly due to online event registration.</p> <p>The Hackney Society Planning Group, continues to thrive, and recently met again in person, and both Lisa Shell and Nick will continue to be involved. Lisa added that Hackney council's IT problems have caused many problems.</p> <p>Finally Nick added a personal wish for continuing collaboration with Hackney History. The report was approved, proposed by Fiona Darbyshire and seconded by Tony Gillett.</p>
<p>4. Report of the Independent Financial Examiner for the year 2017/18</p>	<p>Tony Gillett spoke to the accounts, and explained that the reserves stood at £27, 507, up by nearly £6, 000 on the previous year; £9,400 represented the value of our stock of books, but that means our cash reserves are over £19,000. Membership – due he believed to the popularity of our online events – at just under £3,000 is the highest it has been for 8 years. Book sales came to nearly £6,000 much higher than the average over the last 10 years. This, of course, is due to the success of <i>Women from Hackney's History</i>, which has also sold over £3,000 since March.</p> <p>He thanked Dave Harris, the Independent Financial Examiner, who could not be here due to domestic duties, for his continued assistance at no charge to the Society. The accounts were approved, proposed by Nick Perry and seconded by Julia Lafferty.</p>
<p>5. Election of Independent Financial Examiner.</p>	<p>Tony Gillett proposed that David be re-appointed as Independent Financial Examiner to the Society for the following year.</p> <p>The proposal, seconded by Ray Blackburn, was agreed.</p>
<p>6. Thanks to Retiring Trustees</p>	<p>Ray Blackburn, on behalf of the remaining Trustees, spoke about the retiring Trustees. Laurie Elks had been a trustee since 2014 and before that had long experience across many organisations and campaigns in Hackney. He brought energy, ideas and contacts to benefit the Events Group, and he and Ray produced popular programmes of walks, talks and visits. Laurie will continue to support events into the rest of 2021 and beyond. As well as contributing many articles to Spaces Laurie edited Hackney: Portrait of a</p>

	<p>Community 1967-2017, marshalling 50 pieces by 50 authors, and also driving its impressive sales. Monica Blake had been a trustee for 15 years, and chaired the Publications Group, which enabled a number of well received books that also sold well. For over 10 years she was also editor of Spaces, our quarterly newsletter and a regular source of good reading and information. Glory Hall, designer of Spaces and some of our recent books, describes Monica as "a joy to work with" and "a consummate professional who knows her onions!" Monica also served some time as Vice-Chair of the Society. Nick Perry first became a trustee in 2012 and has led the Society from a time when we had paid staff until now, where we rely solely on the volunteer work of trustees and members. He has helped us deal with the advent of social media, online publication, cashless transactions, a 50th anniversary and most recently a more virtual existence arising from the C-19 pandemic. Working with Tony Gillett, our Treasurer, he will leave our accounts and finances in good order. Nick has been active in the Planning Group, whose Chair Lisa Shell says he fulfilled a managing secretary role with a mastery of technology that has underpinned their work in the increasingly online planning process. The Planning Group is "hugely relieved that Nick is not stepping down from this irreplaceable role". Nick will also provide technical support to the Society's activities for some time to come.</p> <p>The meeting gave all 3 a vote of thanks and a round of applause.</p> <p>Ray also said thanks to the 5 people - so far - who have expressed interest in joining or supporting the trustees in furthering the Hackney Society's aims and activities. The trustees will get in touch to discuss how best we can harness their enthusiasm, energy and expertise.</p>
<p>7. Questions from members/ Announcements</p>	<p>Colin Brooking asked about our involvement with the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies. Nick replied that they provide access to some interesting meetings; however Laurie Elks who had attended one in person was less than complimentary. Ray said the next Hackney Society event would be on October 16.</p>

[www.hackneysociety.org](http://www.hackneysociety.org)

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