Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Lithic Studies Society

held on Friday 1st November 2013 at 12.00 pm at

Franks House, 38-56 Orsman Road, London N1 5QJ

Present:

Alec Rainey, Andrew David, Barry Bishop (BB), Bill Bee, Lesley Blundell, Claire Fisher (CF), Frances Healy, Frank Beresford, Hannah Fluck (HF), Hazel Martingell, J. Edwin Jarvis, Jacky Sommerville, James Cole (JC), John C. Sharp (JCS), John Venables, Laura Basell (LB), Martina Delany, Molly Pearce (MP), Olaf Bayer (OB), Sam Griffiths (SG)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Alan Saville, Andy Shaw (AS), Beccy Shaw (BS), Caroline Wells, David Walters, Dene Wright, Hugo Anderson-Whymark (HA-W), John Lewis, Matt Pope, Paul Hart, Rebecca Devaney, Rob Banbury (RB), Rob Hosfield, Wei Chu (WC)

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held on Friday 2th November 2012 at Franks House, Orsman Rd, London, were circulated. LB noted that they omitted the election of Hannah Fluck as joint Events Secretary along with Claire Fisher and this should be added under Point 6. With this amendment the minutes were unanimously approved by the AGM.

3. Matters Arising

No matters arising were raised.

4. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the committee had met three times since the last AGM. Poor attendance at committee meetings was a problem. To encourage members with limited income or who live at considerable distance, the committee had decided that travel costs to meetings would be paid by the Society. The Chair circulated a copy of the expenses form, noting that only minimal and agreed travel costs arising solely from attending the meeting by members living at a fair distance could be claimed for, and the operation and costs of this would be reviewed on a yearly basis.

The Chair noted that the Society had been represented by committee members at many events including internationally, and appealed for Society members to help promote the Society at any events they might attend. Help and advice can be obtained from the Publicity Officer, RB, and Society banners and membership forms can be provided.

The Chair noted that we had a number of very successful events last year and expressed her thanks to HA-W for organizing the conference held in Oxford, HF for the annual Butser weekend and CF for the new series of lithic based workshops and talks held at Franks House. She appealed to any members working on any projects involving lithics who would like to share and discuss their work to get in contact with CF.

The Chair reported that she had been approached by Maney Publishing with a view to forming an association between them and the Society and/or *Lithics*. Various types of relationships were proposed and these had been discussed at length by the committee. It was decided that as both the Society and *Lithics* were dynamic, successful and healthy, and as forming such an association could involve the relinquishing of some independence, there would be no advantages to the Society. As such, all scenarios were deemed unsuitable.

The Chair reported that the committee had spent considerable time discussing ways of ensuring it stays effective and best serves the Society. Consequently, proposals for a number of changes to the committee structure were to be discussed later in the meeting (see item 13).

The Chair acknowledged that there had been some issues with the website recently, but that SG had been co-opted to help Dave Underhill and that an effort was being made to rectify any problems.

The Chair apologized to the meeting as, due to individual workloads, paper notifications had not been sent out in the required 30 days prior to the AGM, affecting around 120 members for whom we do not hold email addresses. It was also noted that such paper mailings are very expensive, especially with recent increases in photocopying, printing and postage costs - however not all members have access to the internet or an email address. Following discussion it was agreed that a communication should be sent to all members requesting their email address and that no more paper mailing would be sent out following this unless the member replies and specifically requests to continue to receive paper mailings.

The Chair reported that the co-opted Publicity Officer, RB, had worked very hard, securing a number of promotional aids including a Society banner and other publicity materials. RB has also forged contacts with the Ancient Technology Centre, with which it is hoped the Society will partake in a number of joint projects. This has all markedly increased the profile of the Society. The Society is also considering advertising a series of lithics-based placements for students.

Lastly, the Chair reported that the Wymer Bursary had been awarded to Tom Elliot for work on geochemical analysis of Mesolithic artefacts found in the Wye Valley using mass spectrometry (ICP-MS and LA-ICP-MS).

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer could not be present but submitted the following report which was read to the meeting by the Chair, and a copy of the Statement of Accounts was circulated to the meeting:

The financial statement (circulated to the meeting) demonstrates a significant increase in income (which is always good) and a significant increase in spending. This reflects an increase in expenditure on, and income from, events. I think this reflects well in terms of the vibrancy of the Society. One thing worth noting is that since 2009 (when the Society's finances were heading in a down direction) the bank balance has increased by £9,215.62. In sum, currently the Society finances are healthy, and its income and expenditure is well balanced. In addition, the report demonstrates that Paypal is an increasingly important tool for the Society's finances, which is reflected by the fact that the majority of new members join via it. In terms of membership, we've had 48 new members over the last 12 months, which is slightly more than the number we've lost. Membership is currently c. 380. One other thing I have to report is that we are going to receive a c.£1000 donation, the stipulation of which is that it is to be used for the publication of Roger Jacobi's memorial volume.

The Treasurer also made an appeal for everyone to check that their standing order payments are up-to-date, and that people who pay by cheque do so ASAP.

The Chair also noted that the £300 agreed at the last meeting to buy the Society a printer has not been spent. This matter will be for the next Secretary to discuss with the committee.
The means of paying subscriptions by cheque was raised. It was noted that cheques should be made payable to "The Lithics Studies Society" and should be sent to the Treasurer, c/o Franks House.

6. Editors' Report

The Editors could not be present but submitted the following report which was read to the meeting by the Chair:

The Editors, BS and AS, have taken the decision to step down a year ahead of time, as they now cannot devote the time to the production of Lithics *that it deserves. BS has been assisted over the course of this year by WC, who has taken over responsibility for short notes, reports, and book reviews, and who hopes to take over responsibility for the editorship hereafter. BS and WC, assisted by AS and Peter Hoare, will bring* Lithics *34 through publication before handing over to the new editor.*

Again we have had problems in receiving enough publications of a high enough quality to make it through the review process, and despite putting calls out for more submissions, are low on guaranteed content for Lithics *34. We hope to get the completed manuscript to Fidelity by Christmas, for early January distribution.* (A list of articles received to date for the next edition of Lithics was circulated to the meeting).

Thank you to all contributors and reviewers who have helped out over the last four years, and to WC for all his support this year.

The Chair expressed her thanks to AS and BS for doing an outstanding job in improving the standard of *Lithics* during their editorship.

7. Secretary's Report

The Secretary reported a busy year and that, along with the usual administrative duties, he had been engaged in correlating committee discussions on a number of long standing issues, including resolving the imbalance in the workload distribution of the committee: some posts involving considerable attention whilst other posts have no defined duties. Attendance is also problematic, with some committee members not having attended meetings for a number of years. The outcome of this has been the committee agreeing on proposals to amend the Constitution to allow a restructuring of the committee, which would result in fewer posts but with roles more tightly defined. This was presented for full discussion later in the meeting (see Item 13).

8. Webmaster's Report

The webmaster could not be present but submitted the following report which was read to the meeting by JC:

The website is still used but not as much as is desirable. There have been several problems this year, mainly related to the loss of my personal hosting, which housed the .pdf library. This has now been sorted (but see below).

I would like to welcome Sam Griffiths, co-opted to assist me with the site, three jobs and a new born take up virtually all of my time at present, a situation I hope won't last!

I intend to implement a form of wiki and Calendar to allow the committee greater access to adding content to the site, this might necessitate something of a redesign but this shall be in consultation with the committee, any further ideas welcome.

The site is still hosted for free on the britarch servers, but this has limitations in terms of space and control. We would like to purchase some hosting so the site isn't split up between hosts, as at present, and the .pdf library can live with the site. SG is looking into potential costs.

Facebook membership continues to grow but it is worrying that not everyone on the Facebook site has joined the society, and ideas for converting memberships would be welcome.

LB reiterated the desirability to get Facebook members to sign up as full Society members and that some were attending events despite not being Society members. CF asked if the Events' Secretaries could have access to membership lists to ensure only fully paid up members could attend events. This will be discussed further with the Membership Secretary.

Several members at the meeting said they had experienced difficulties accessing the website. BB said that there had been problems and delays in changing passwords but many of these now solved. LB would re-advertise instructions on logging into the members section of the website.

9. Publicity Officer's Report

The publicity officer could not be present but submitted the following report which was read to the meeting:

At the start of the year, I purchased a free-standing exhibition banner with LSS design and a display case for back issues of Lithics *at a total cost of £241. They have been used to good effect at several conferences and the Butser knapping weekend to promote the Society and engage with potential new members.*

A new 4-colour membership leaflet has been created, and distributed through various outlets and events during the year.

The Oxford conference and the Franks House workshops have been routinely advertised to the membership via email circulars and through the Facebook forum.

Following an approach in April, the Ancient Technology Centre (ATC) in Dorset has proposed a Symposium on the Stone Age next year which they hope the Society might like to help them organise and promote. We have also been invited to support their annual Stone Age Weekend which may run concurrently with the symposium.

Society publications and back issues of Lithics *have been sold at the conferences providing additional revenue. Thank you to members who manned the LSS stand at each.*

The Publicity Officer also appealed to the membership for any ideas on merchandize carrying the Society's logo that could be purchased for promoting the Society, such as clothing, mugs etc. Ideas put forward included pens and badges with contact/joining details that could be distributed at events.

10. Events Officers' Report

CF reported that the Franks House Research Group Meetings were developing healthily and are well attended, with substantial benefits to both presenters and attendees. CF appealed to anyone wishing to share their research to get in contact. Future workshops will also include experimental work.

Additional events held in London included a talk on gunflint makers by HA-W, a lithic illustration workshop by Craig Williams and a workshop on 'Reporting and Best Practice', with talks by Dan Petts about the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Hannah Fluck about Historic Environment Records, the results of which have inspired the discussion to be held after the AGM.

The advertising of events was raised and it was stated that they are advertised by email and on Facebook, and with a paper copy included with *Lithics*.

HF reported that the Butser event went well and the hot water and flushing toilets were greatly appreciated. It draws great public interest which is very important to the Society but puts pressure on the knappers, and she suggested that the fees for those helping with the event may be reduced in future. Butser have said that, as long as no special events are being held, Society members are welcome to turn up and practice their knapping if they give a few days' notice. John Lord brings quantities of Norfolk flint which is left there and available for use. HF also brought up the possibility of establishing a research fund that could help people who wish to undertake experimental work at Butser, for example with travel costs. This would be on condition that the work was written up for publication in *Lithics* and that the records are kept at Butser. This will be discussed further by the committee. The Society's next visit to Butser is planned for the 9th and 10th August 2014.

11. Conference Report

The organizer of the 2013 Society conference could not attend the meeting.

12. The Society's Role as a Champion for Best Practice

CF and HF reported the committee's desire that the Society should have a position on how we advise on matters relating to lithic artefacts, and that it acts as a 'Champion for Best Practice' by both discouraging activities detrimental to the wider study and understanding of lithic artefacts and to encourage the public recording and dissemination of knowledge of lithic artefacts found by or in the possession of individuals, or otherwise not available for public study. These issues and the potential stance of the Society formed the basis of a discussion following the meeting.

The recording of lithic artefacts with the PAS and HERs was discussed. It was noted that the PAS had approached the Society to give feedback on a guide developed for their Finds Liaison Officers. The meeting was reminded of the unfinished Lithics Glossary, a draft of which is currently in the possession of Elizabeth Healey, and it was thought that a resurrected version of this might be useful in forming a basis for a recording manual.

A small sub-committee will be formed to look into the above issues.

13. Review of the Committee Structure and Membership

The Chair reported the view that the 5 year length of term for officers on the committee was too long. There was also an imbalance in the workload for committee members and that some committee members rarely attended meetings. As there were a lot of elections to the Committee this year it would be a good time to evaluate its structure. These issues had been discussed at length by the committee and a set of proposals formulated. The Chair circulated a copy of the proposed changes.

However, due to not all members being informed of the AGM and of the proposals to change the Constitution at least 30 days prior to the meeting, as required by the Constitution, the proposed changes could not be approved by this meeting.

Following discussion by the meeting, the Chair proposed that these changes should be voted on now and, if accepted, could be implemented straight away, but with the clear proviso that the changes are made explicit in the minutes and that these would be sent to all members, and that they would be further discussed and a proposal to ratify them voted on at next year's (2014) AGM. The proposal was seconded by JC and approved unanimously by the meeting.

The proposed changes to the Constitution are:

Change 1. Currently, Clause 5 of the Constitution reads:

"5 Executive Committee
An executive committee shall undertake the management of the affairs of the society. This committee shall comprise ten (10) officers and ten (10) ordinary committee members."

We would like to reduce the number of Officers to 8 and Ordinary Committee members to 4. Consequently we would like to reword this part of the constitution so that it reads:

"5 Executive Committee
An executive committee shall undertake the management of the affairs of the society. This committee shall comprise eight (8) officers and four (4) ordinary committee members."

This was proposed by LB and seconded by JC and approved unanimously by the meeting

Change 2. Currently, Clause 6 of the Constitution reads:

"6 Officers
The officers of the society shall comprise a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, the Editor of Lithics, Deputy Editor, Events Officer (two posts), Publicity Officer and a Webmaster. The executive committee may co-opt assistants to help any officer. Officers shall be elected at the annual general meeting and serve for a maximum of five (5) years and may stand again for election provided that there has been a four (4) year gap between finishing their term and standing for re-election. Officers may stand for election as ordinary members after finishing their term of office."

To ensure the committee remains energetic and focussed, and to encourage active participation and regular turnover of members running of the Society we would like to reduce the length of time Officers spend in their respective positions to 3 years with the exception of the Chair and the Vice Chair (which is elaborated on below). We would also like to propose that having held the position of an Officer for 3 years, a Member may not be re-elected to the same Officer Position, *EXCEPT* in the event that no-one else has come forward to fill the role and the person is willing to stand for re-election for a further term.

We would like to propose that the Officer position of Sub-Editor is abolished and the number of Events Officer positions is reduced to one.

We would like to propose that the person elected to become Vice Chair goes on to become Chair. This will ensure continuity and allow the Vice Chair to "learn the ropes" and develop ideas before going on to run the Society for 2 years. The outgoing Chair will step down to the position of Vice Chair to assist where necessary in the first year of the incoming Chair. We do not wish to change the responsibilities of Vice Chair except that in taking on the role, s/he is doing so with the expectation of becoming Chair. We are keen to ensure continuity and to reduce the period any one person holds the position. Having been Vice Chair and Chair for 4 years, we would like to propose that a Member may not be re-elected to the same Officer Position, *EXCEPT* in the event that no-one else has come forward to fill the role and the person is willing to stand for re-election for a further term.

Consequently we would like to reword this part of the constitution so that it reads:

"6 Officers
The Officers of the Society shall comprise a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, the Editor of Lithics, a Webmaster, a Publicity Officer and an Events Officer. The executive committee may co-opt assistants to help any officer. Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and serve for a maximum of three (3) years with the exception of Vice Chair/Chair. All Officers may stand again for election provided that there has been a three (3) year gap between finishing their term and standing for re-election EXCEPT in the event that no-one else has come forward to fill the role and the person is willing to stand for re-election for a further term. Officers

may stand for election as Ordinary Members after finishing their term of office. Under normal circumstances, the Vice Chair will be elected with a view to becoming Chair. Having acted as Vice Chair for one (1) year, s/he will then take on the role of Chair for two (2) years before standing down to the position of Vice Chair for a further one (1) year. "

This was proposed by LB and seconded by JCS and approved unanimously by the meeting

Change 3. If Changes 1 and 2 are agreed, then the following Clauses will need to be amended.

Clause 7 currently reads:

"*7 Ordinary Committee Members*
The ten (10) ordinary members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the annual general meeting. Individuals may serve as ordinary committee members for three years and may stand again for election."

Proposed to be changed to:

"7 Ordinary Committee Members
The four (4) Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting. Individuals may serve as Ordinary Committee Members for three (3) years and may stand again for election to any role."

Clause 13 currently reads:

"*13 Chair's Duties*
The Chair shall be the presiding Officer of the society. The Chair shall co-ordinate the activities of the society and actively seek to ensure the furtherance of the society's objects."

Proposed to be changed to:

"13 Chair's Duties
The Chair shall be the presiding Officer of the society. The Chair shall co-ordinate the activities of the society and actively seek to ensure the furtherance of the society's objects. Under normal circumstances, the Chair's role will be directly linked to that of the Vice Chair (see 14)."

Clause 14 currently reads:

"14 Vice-Chair Duties
The Vice-Chair shall deputise for the Chair when necessary. In addition the Vice-Chair shall have special responsibility for overseeing any literature, publications or material issued in the society's name, and for maintaining an archive of the society's literature. In this regard the Vice-Chair will automatically act as Chair of the Editorial Sub-Committee."

Proposed to be changed to:

"14 Vice-Chair Duties
The person elected to the position of Vice-Chair will be taken on with the expectation that s/he will become Chair after one year in the position of Vice Chair. S/he shall deputise for the Chair when necessary. In addition the Vice-Chair shall have special responsibility for overseeing any literature, publications or material issued in the Society's name, and for maintaining an archive of the society's literature. In this regard the Vice-Chair will automatically act as Chair of any Editorial Sub-Committee which might be formed. Having been Vice Chair for one (1) year, then Chair for two (2) years, the outgoing Chair will then hold the position of Vice Chair for a further one (1) year before stepping down"

This was proposed by LB and seconded by SG and approved unanimously by the meeting

Change 4. We have noted that the Webmaster's role is not presently defined. In addition, following on from Change 1 if approved, we would like the agreement of the Membership to define the following roles following discussion with those currently holding them and would seek to ratify those changes at the next AGM following circulation:

- Webmaster
- Publicity Officer
- Events Officer

This was proposed by LB and seconded by CF and approved unanimously by the meeting

15. Election of New Officers

The roles of Vice Chair, Editor, Secretary and three ordinary members had become vacant. Additionally the new role of Publicity Officer, currently undertaken by Rob Banbury on a co-opted basis, needed filling.

Olaf Bayer had been nominated for Vice Chair, Wei Chu for Editor, Molly Pearce for Secretary, Rob Banbury for Publicity Officer, Antony Whitlock as ordinary member with responsibility for the 2014 conference, Sam Griffiths as ordinary member with responsibility to assist with the website and Lynden Cooper as ordinary member with responsibilities to assist the editor. The nominees present read short statements of their suitability to the meeting, the Chair reading out statements for those who could not be present.

As none of the posts were being challenged a mass vote was held, nominated by LS and seconded by JC, and all of the nominees were elected unanimously.

It was agreed that if he would agree, the Committee would co-opt Ian Herbertson to assist the Treasurer with the hope that he would consent to stand for the post which will become vacant next year.

16. Date of Next Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that the next AGM will be held at Franks House, London, at 12.00pm on the 7th November 2014.