

Retired Prison Governors Association

A section of The Prison Governors Association

Chairman

Graham Smith

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Treasurer

Graham Mumby-Croft

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Secretary

Jan Thompson

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held via Zoom on Thursday 7th November 2024 at 13.30 hours

The RPGA Chairman, Graham Smith, welcomed all present to this years' Annual General Meeting.

1. Present:

Committee:

Graham Smith (Chairman)

Jan Thompson (Minutes)

Paul Laxton

Graham Mumby-Croft

Kevin Billson

Roger Outram

Members:

Phil Taylor

Dave Taylor

Barbara Treen

Rob Isdale

John Pudney

Derek Aram

Ben Mnyama

2. Apologies:

Harry Brett

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023

These have been published on the RPGA Website. All members present agreed to adopt the minutes as a true record.

Proposed by: Paul Laxton

Seconded by: Roger Outram

4. Matters arising

Reference	Action	Responsibility	Progress
8.10.23	To discuss the possibility of reassessing the debate of the printed copy of the newsletter versus the website availability.	All Committee Members	Completed

5. Treasurers' Report - Graham Mumby-Croft

The Treasurers' report was published in the Autumn edition of the Newsletter.

Graham made a screen version available for everyone to see. The Headline figures for the year ending December 2023 were as follows:

Total Income for the year: £5,121.00

Total Expenditure for the year: £5,680.96

This represents a deficit of £559.96 for the year.

The Cash Balance at the end of 2023: **£14,981.57**

He went on to explain that the newsletter is the most expensive item that we have. The stationary, phone and postal costs are included in the cost of the newsletter as most of our postal costs are for posting out the newsletter and posting out the diaries as well. He pointed out that in the previous year (2022), we had a surplus of £323.17 which means that in 2023 we were worse off by £883.13 on the year.

Graham stated that the current up-to-date situation is that the latest newsletter (Autumn 2024) has been paid for. The edition contained 52 pages and 290 copies were printed, of which 260 were posted to members in the UK and 4 posted overseas. The cost of the latest autumn newsletter was £1,713.20. **In comparison**, the Autumn 2023 newsletter was also 52 pages and 400 copies were printed/posted out at a cost of £2,499.80. The reduction in the print size is due to email copies being sent out for the first time and has saved us around **£800**. Over the period of a complete financial year this represents a saving of approximately £1000. Graham then explained that if we had not sent any newsletters out via email the cost of printing/posting out the newsletter would eat into our reserve cash balance (year on year) as our expenditure would always be more than what we take as income and we would try to keep the yearly deficit to a minimum for as long as possible. So by issuing an email copy of the newsletter to those members willing to receive it in this way will help us do this.

The chairman thanked Graham and asked if we could agree to adopt the treasurers' report as a correct record of events. This was proposed by Dave Taylor, seconded by Bob Isdale and agreed by all present.

6. Membership Report - Harry Brett

Unfortunately Harry was unable to attend the AGM but sent his report as follows:

At the AGM in October 2023 there were 398 members.

At the AGM in October 2024 there were 353 members.

We have lost 23 members (18 full members and 5 non-paying members). Some of these have been lost due to the reconciliation of the members' list. Graham M-C stated that the membership list had been severely 'pruned' in the reconciliation exercise. It was also noted that there had been 16 member deaths since the 2023 AGM and 9 deaths of non-members.

After reading out the names (as shown below), the Chairman led a one minute silence for our deceased members.

MEMBERS

John Dovell	Peter Quinn	William Thompson	Douglas Moon
Ken Alderson	Stuart Millikin	Roy Smith	Jim Blakey
Eric Jackson	Michael Williams	Ian Simmonds	Margaret Brookes
Derek Myers	Dennis Moseley	Mrs R J E Wright	Frank Robinson

NON-MEMBERS

Norman Halliday	Keith Lawson	Gary Pavey	Adrian Turner
Ernie Foster	Viv Bushell	John Forster	Danny McAllister
Rod Jacques			

In his report, Harry mentioned that the new system of contacting recently retired Governor Grades (an invitation from James Bryant) may not be working and that we would probably be better going back to the old system whereby Harry contacted the recently retired governors. The committee have discussed this at the Committee Meeting earlier and agreed that the 'old' way was probably the way forward. Graham Smith also said that he would try to get a 5 minute slot at the 2025 PGA Conference to promote the RPGA.

7. Civil Service Pensioners Alliance - Kevin Billson.

Kevin was elected to the CSPA this year and gave a short feedback on the position of the CSPA.

He started by saying that the CSPA continued to campaign on a lot of issues important to us as retired Prison Governors. They have recently held their AGM which was quite well attended, although their group structure is struggling to maintain active membership and since Covid people have not wanted to attend face to face meetings. So, what the CSPA are doing now to try to attract new members is via online membership. Like many other charities, they are arguing against the governments' decision to finish the winter fuel allowance payment. Another concern for us is that Capita are taking over the contract again for the administration of our pensions, so the CPSA are maintaining close contact with the Cabinet Office to make sure it's a smooth transition and also their previous issues about Data Protection.

Kevin went on to say that the CSPA had over 35,000 members. Although the bargain Travel Insurance is no longer available, the CSPA have introduced a 'Fit For Travel' Insurance which covers you for the whole year and seems to be proving quite attractive to a lot of the current members.

The Chairman thanked Kevin for his report and stated that he was an important link for us to the CSPA.

8. Newsletter - Paul Laxton

Paul stated that he had been the editor of the newsletter since 2015, edition 74, although he didn't edit either of the 2021 editions but thanked Graham Mumby-Croft for stepping in. He continued to say that the newsletter is thriving and there are plenty of contributions coming in. This autumn's edition was 52 pages and that was without the PGA Conference report as we had to go to press a bit earlier this year so that we could include the change of arrangements for our AGM. The PGA Conference report will appear in the spring edition.

He continued that some people may have noticed that Bob Duncans' "Your Letters" column didn't appear this time for the first time ever since he began it many years ago. He hasn't been well but his memoirs are currently being serialised - Roger releases several pages to Paul for each edition and there appears to be a few years supply left.

Since we took the decision to go into colour, the quality of the newsletter as improved immensely: it looks better and has probably encouraged people who didn't previously write for us to actually send some things in for publication.

Paul expanded on the survey that we carried out reference the introduction of the email version of the newsletter and the savings that has made. Dave Taylor commented that this is an age old argument that we have had for years, as have many other associations. His thoughts were that we should try hard to get everyone with internet access to have the email copy as they can print it out if they so desired, thereby reducing the number of hard copies required yet still retaining the membership numbers.

John Putney expressed his concern about the lack of increase of membership and asked if the retirement age was still 60. Paul stated that people could go on to 66 and beyond if they wished. John continued to say that he retired in 1988 and has enjoyed being a member of the RPGA since then although the trouble is now that he hardly recognises anyones' name in the newsletter and if he recognises them one occasion they've died by the next edition! He mentioned that we appear to have a large number of senior members and need to attract more younger members. He asked the question: 'What is the objective or the attraction to joining the RPGA now?' When he retired, one of the benefits was free legal support and wondered what we could offer to encourage newly retired governors to join.

Graham Smith replied that the difficulty was contacting them as people now tended to retire and vanish into society and we don't get to know about it. Graham Mumby-Croft added that, in his time, he had never known the RETIRED prison governors association providing legal cover but the PGA always did and is part of the current membership of the PGA albeit it is a very expensive thing for them to provide and we certainly couldn't afford to offer it within our current subscription rate. He continued to say that, as treasurer, his aim was to keep the subscription rate at its current rate for as long as possible. The reason behind that is because some members don't change their standing order to fit in with new subscription rates, as proved when the rate went up about six years ago. This resulted in people paying far less than they should have and other members are then subsidising them. Also, people were paying into bank account that we were no longer using and our only option was to close that account in the hope that when members standing orders were returned to them they would contact us to find out why. John replied that he found the whole thing very sad.

9. Website Update and email Register - Roger Outram.

Roger started his report by saying that the website had been running for about five years and is really just a digital representation of the newsletter and seems to be being an archive for the newsletter, although unfortunately a number of editions have been lost over the years. He commented that the website is growing and will be used more and more in the future. So far, in 2024, there have been 1,817 views which equates to approximately 165 views per month. When we put into the equation that only about 200 members have access to the internet the 165 views per month is encouraging. Also, out of the 1,817 views so far, 177 have been first time viewers. Roger made a plea to everyone that if you have a copy of a newsletter that has not been published on the website, could you send it to him and he will return it to you after he has published it on the website.

Paul mentioned that the newsletter started in 1984, the editor then being Brendon O'Friel who continued till 2005 when Mick Roebuck helped to co-edit. Paul took the helm in 2015 and stated that there had only ever been six editors of the newsletter (apart from when Graham Mumby-Croft produced two editions when Paul was unavailable). Paul went on to say that other previous editors, Mick Roebuck and John Powls had told him that they didn't have any archive material at all.

The chairman thanked Roger for his attention to the website and Roger reminded us that the RPGA website could be accessed by typing in www.rpga.homestead.com and it didn't need a password.

10. Re-Election Of Committee Members

Two committee members were up for re-election: Graham Smith (Chairman) and Jan Thompson (Secretary).

Graham Mumby-Croft proposed the chairman and this was seconded by Roger Outram.

Graham Mumby-Croft proposed the secretary and this was seconded by Roger Outram.

Both committee members stated that they were willing to serve another 4 year term and were duly elected by all present.

Graham Smith then asked if any of the members present would like to join the committee. After some discussion, Barbara Treen agreed to put herself forward. Kevin Bilson formally proposed Barbara and this was seconded by Graham Mumby-Croft. Everyone present agreed and Barbara was duly elected to the committee.

11. Members' Resolutions

There was one resolution for discussion put forward by Bob Mason: The management of asbestos in the prison estate.

Unfortunately Bob Mason was not present but had sent an article for the newsletter about his concerns. Graham Mumby-Croft, who has a works background, stated that he wasn't quite sure what Bob Masons' resolution was or what he was pushing for but could only say that he thought Bob was closely involved with someone who was in the service who has been diagnosed with Mesothelioma (an illness directly related to contact with asbestos which is almost always fatal with no known cure) and is pushing for information about asbestos in prison establishments. Graham said that there had been a full survey of all asbestos in all prison establishments in the 1970's and that every maintenance department in every prison had a register of all the asbestos that was in their establishment; where it was, what condition it was in and there was a programme to remove any asbestos identified as high risk or being in poor condition. He went on to say that in respect of the RPGA, he didn't think there was much we could do as an association to push that forward as we have no influence now with the Prisons Board.

Dave Taylor stated that he knew Bob Mason personally and it is he himself who has contracted the disease. Dave continued that he thought the appropriate thing to do was to refer this to the PGA to enquire if they intend to fund, start or contribute to any investigation into this to prevent any future experiences of this kind and we should encourage them fund an enquiry or to ask the service to undertake an enquiry into a) Bobs' condition b) the possibility of where he might have contracted it from (if indeed it was a prison establishment) and c) what is being done to prevent a recurrence.

The chairman thanked Dave Taylor for his comments and proposed to remit this to the PGA. The proposal was agreed by all present. **Action Point - GS**

It was agreed that a member of the committee would contact Bob Mason to let him know the outcome of his resolution.

12.Date of next Annual General Meeting

The date of the next AGM is provisionally set for Monday 6th October 2025, at 13.30 hours, at the venue of the PGA Conference if this can be arranged but this is to be confirmed at a later date.

The chairman thanked everyone for their attendance, particularly the members, and said how nice it was to have them joining. The meeting closed at 14.25hrs.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

Reference	Action	Responsibility
11.11.24	Send a remit to the PGA reference an investigation into asbestos in the prison estate.	Graham Smith

