**Minutes of the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Society of Friends of the Imperial War Museum held in the HCA auditorium at the Churchill War Rooms on Wednesday 17th January 2018 at 5.00pm**

**Present**

Major General David Burden, CB CVO CBE, Chairman

Ms Emma Burrows

Mr Adrian Coles

Mr Tony Hine, Treasurer

Mr David Long MBE

Mr Philip Middleton

Professor Paul O’Prey CBE

**In attendance:**

Mr John Brown, Executive Director Commercial Services and Operations, IWM

Mr Pete Austin, Assistant Director Communications and Marketing, IWM

Mr Mridul Khariwal, Haysmacintyre

Ms Claire Owen, Head of Membership

Ms Rachel Bannerman, Membership Officer

110? IWM Friends attended the AGM.

1. **Welcome** **by Major General David Burden, Acting Chairman of the Friends of Imperial War Museum**

Major General Burden opened the meeting and welcomed all present. He introduced and thanked Council members for their continuing contribution.

He went on to announce Ms Owen’s departure from the Society in March, to take up a new role at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. He thanked Ms Owen for her contribution to the society as Head of Membership since 2014 and Ms Bannerman who will be taking up the role from March onwards. He also paid tribute to Laura Whitman’s long standing contribution up to her departure in October 2017 and the support of 27 volunteers who have worked in the office, in the museums and off-site. Special mention was made of Sue Morris and Gordon Thorpe for their work organising the popular events programme.

Particular thanks also went to the work of John Brown and the IWM itself: staff, facilities and professionalism of exhibits. He acknowledged the close relationship between the society and IWM, forged by Dame Peake and the Trustees.

Mention was also made of the museum’s offer to Friends as very generous and (especially that of the offer to Life members) reflective of the value that the museum placed on the relationship between the two organisations.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from:

Lady Vaizey CBE, Professor Sir David Cannadine, Mr Foster Summerson, Andrew Peake, David Sewell of *Haysmacintyre* and 16 IWM Friends. Apologies also came from Diane Lees, Director General, IWM

1. **Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting held on 31 October 2016**

The minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting were approved.

The minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting held on 30th March 2017 were approved.

1. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

1. **Election of David Burden as Chairman and Adrian Coles as Trustee**

Mr David Long proposed David Burden as Chairman. This was agreed.

David Burden proposed Adrian Coles as Trustee. This was agreed.

1. **Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30th April 2017**

Mr Hine presented the report and accounts, approved by the Independent Examiner. He made reference to the increased Restricted Funds total, following a revaluation of the oil painting *Sailing in the Solent* from £15,000 to £40,000. Mr Hine also highlighted the increase in Unrestricted Funds through increased membership payments and advertising revenue. He confirmed that a grant of £65,000 had been donated to IWM, an increase of £10,000.

Two questions from the floor:

A friend asked about the cost of the revaluation of the oil painting. The precise figure was not to hand.

A friend asked about the insurance arrangements for the oil painting. Ms Owen clarified that the painting was covered by the museum’s insurance.

The Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30th April 2017 were approved.

1. **Re-appointment of David Sewell at Haysmacintyre as Independent Examiner**

David Sewell at Haysmacintyre was re-appointed as Independent Examiner.

1. **Head of Friends Report**

On behalf of the Council, Friends staff and volunteers, Ms Owen thanked all Friends for their continued support.

She reported on the continued growth in members up from 5,575 to just under 6,000 in 2017, with a 16% increase in actual membership subscription income. Without the physical presence of a membership desk or the budget to afford large-scale marketing campaigns, the online recruitment tool had been essential in ensuring this steady growth.

Ms Owen highlighted the continued success of the events programme throughout the year and thanked dedicated event volunteers Sue Morris and Gordon Thorpe for their work in researching and delivering events that are consistently sold-out.

She went on to describe the growing success of the Despatches magazine from the first issue in 1988 to the final edition in December 2017; attributing this to the collaborative style in which it was produced, with the magazine having an Editorial board, chaired by Council member Professor Paul O’Prey, comprised of curators, historians, retail and marketing professionals from across the museum. The recruitment of *Cultureshock Media* in 2016 to design and manage the advertising sales for Despatches resulted in a reduction of costs and an increase in advertising revenue from £5,647 to £11,889. Acknowledging that Despatches will be sorely missed by members and IWM staff alike, Ms Owen went on to thank all the contributors and editorial committee for their work on such a prestigious publication.

Ms Owen also presented some of the key findings from the survey of Members conducted in 2017.

In summing up:

“In the year 2016/17 the FIWM annual donation to the museum increased from £55,000 to £65,000 meaning that since the society was founded in 1987 the charity has donated over £700,000. Whilst this is an enormous achievement in its own right it’s also important to highlight the non-financial contribution the Friends have made towards the work of the museum. Friend’s staff and most museum staff have thought of the Friends as being an integral part of the museum. This mind-set has resulted in numerous examples of joined-up working. As of the *Fashion on the Ration* exhibition in 2015 all exhibition publicity included the line *Members Go Free,* this had never happened before*,* *Despatches* became a paid-for publication in all IWM shops, we worked with the IWM Digital team to offer online payment for members; I was routinely approached by marketing colleagues to offer reciprocal promotional activities for our Friends, the much-loved Friends-only screening of *Their Finest* was typical of this.

With these examples in mind we should feel a great sense of achievement at the positive relationship Friends have developed with the IWM. We should also feel a deep sense of pride in knowing that the Friends built the foundations on which a thriving, collaborative IWM membership programme can now grow.”

1. **Proposal to introduce postal voting and amend the Society’s Constitution**

The Chairman proposed the introduction of postal voting as an amendment to the Society’s Constitution. This led to a number of questions and points raised by friends, as summarised below:

The inclusion of electronic voting was discussed. It was pointed out that a significant number of friends have not supplied an email address to the Society and that, whilst postal costs are a consideration, the staffing and set up costs for electronic voting are likely to be more. This will, however, be considered by Council for future amendments to the Society’s Constitution.

Typographical and grammatical errors were pointed out by a friend and Council confirmed that these will be corrected.

The proposal to introduce postal voting was passed, with 1 vote against and no abstentions recorded.

1. **IWM Membership**

Mr Brown outlined his role as Executive Director of Commercial Services and Operations in relation to the new IWM membership scheme and the museums’ response to current and future challenges within the sector. In answer to issues relating to a general shift in audience profiles and expectations, funding and competition within the sector, the IWM membership scheme is part of the museums’ plans to generate and develop income and thereby secure IWM’s future.

Mr Brown acknowledged the mutually beneficial relationship between the Society and the IWM and expressed the IWM’s deep gratitude for all the support provided by the Society to date.

He went on to report on the launch of the IWM membership scheme in November 2017 and the establishment of the new Membership Department. 4,335 memberships have been purchased to date, with 440 Friends taking up the transition offer and 96 Life Members. He confirmed that current Friends’ membership benefits are still being honoured by IWM and that Friends taking up the IWM offer will receive the initial discount for the first year.

Mr Brown then invited questions, a summary of which below:

A Life Member asked why their card states that they must renew within one year. Mr Brown answered that it should read ‘every 5 years’ and this would be corrected. He reassured those present that Life Membership was for life and that renewal of cards would incur no costs to the individual. He explained that card renewal was in accordance with data protection requirements, as well as a means by which the museum could keep in contact with Life Members without being intrusive.

A Friend asked why a concession rate had not been offered. Mr Brown answered that the membership’s price points were in line, or competitive, with similar organisations so further discounts weren’t warranted.

A Life Member asked if more could be offered to Life Members in relation to the Duxford Air Shows. Mr Brown explained that Duxford Air Shows are at a premium and are always sold out, generating a significant revenue for IWM. Any additions to the already substantial offer to Life Members would have detrimental impact on this revenue.

A Friend asked about the cost of Premium Membership after the initial year’s discount and was given the price as £55.00.

In relation to a question about events Mr Brown stated that events and trips have not been fully planned yet, explaining that the IWM had been concentrating efforts on the administration and launch of the new scheme. The Membership Department will be considering events for the future, with a focus on in-house offerings.

Some Friends related some problems they had encountered with IWM staff when taking up the IWM offer. Mr Brown will feed this back and ensure staff are re-briefed if necessary.

A Friend asked if they were still a member of the Society as their membership had lapsed at the end of December 2017. Ms Owen and Ms Burrows confirmed that Friends with recently lapsed memberships are still considered as Friends, even though the Society has not taken recent payment.

When asked whether the IWM will be producing Despatches, or similar publication, Mr Brown stated that whilst it wasn’t ruled out the heavy production and mailing costs would be a significant consideration. A programme of events or newsletter type communication would more likely be disseminated via email and the website.

After a Friend raised the point that advertising revenue generated by Despatches had risen Mr Brown explained that a proportion of costs had been absorbed by IWM and Mr Hine referred to the accounts to reiterate that the revenue did not cover ongoing production costs.

1. **Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman thanked John Brown and paid tribute to David Long’s work as FIWM Chairman from 2002 to Summer 2017.

1. **Any other business (opportunity for questions)**

A Friend asked if the FIWM would be planning any involvement in the Trooping of the Colour thisyear and was told that there were no such plans for 2018.

1. **Date and time of next meeting**

No date was set for the next AGM but notice was given of a Special General Meeting on 6th March2018 – members to be informed of details via post.

Friends were then invited to the adjacent Harmsworth Room for refreshments.