

**VER POETS**  
**AGM**  
**held at St Michael's Parish Centre**  
**on 21st September 2018**  
**(8.30p.m )**

MINUTES

Chair: Terry Jones  
Present: Gillian Knibbs, John Mole, Greg Smith, Doreen Van Cauter, David Van Cauter, Sandra Galton, Brian Young, Mark Randles, Geoffrey Dale, Sylvia Banham  
Apologies:

1.	<p><b>Chair's Welcome</b></p> <p>TJ introduced GK and GS who explained their roles</p> <p>Successes this year – full programme of events. Highlights – St Albans Library reading included an open mic where we welcomed a different group of people; Belize McKenzie organised an open mic at the Pudding Stop, despite snow; Ten liners evening – judge couldn't come so a last minute idea was devised on short poems which went well; the second members evening which launched four collections.</p> <p>JM – has this translated into any new membership? <i>No</i></p> <p>JM commented that other local groups were not getting any new members. It appears from the newsletter that there are new members who are contributing. <i>Most new members come through the Ver Open.</i></p> <p>The year was successful despite loss of Anna and Simon from the committee, both of whom drove the programme. It is difficult to pick up that work – TJ expressed a concern that the programme was right at the edge of what is practicable.</p> <p>Other help was available – new editor of newsletter, Kevin Maynard who, however, does not live locally. There had been an excellent longer summer edition with many contributions from members and which had benefited from Kevin's knowledge of contemporary poetry</p> <p>JM commented that it was indeed excellent and that the character of the newsletter had been maintained.</p> <p>SB commented there was a need for young people. DVC spoke about rebranding as a spoken word group – crossing the boundary. GK mentioned the work that had been had been done with UH in the past. DVC spoke about the Young Peoples' competition which encouraged him to join. GK explained that the group tried very hard to make this work but ultimately there were not sufficient entries to justify the work it took</p>
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	<p>JM was that in the days before we had a website?</p> <p><i>We are more ahead with social media eg Julian Bishop is running a Twitter feed and provides a regular monthly e-letter.</i></p> <p>It might be time to investigate again. TJ recently judged competition where there was a primary group – 100s of entries, and a secondary group – hardly any.</p> <p>TJ has tried to contact the English departments at local universities and would like to create links.</p> <p>TJ suggested that the committee desperately needs help – to help run the programme but also to ensure there are people to continue the society. Also more people around the table to brainstorm ideas.</p> <p>If it remains the three people, it may be that parts of what we do may have to go. DVC – poetry ID meet every week. Ware are monthly, Enfield are monthly.</p> <p>Ver is different in that we try to devise a programme of events around topics. Other groups tend to use Open Mic format. Poetry ID – all meetings are workshops. Poetry ID have opportunity to write on a theme for an hour and then read their work. Every fourth week is a surgery. The read round was discussed as an element of the programme.</p> <p>GK commented that thoughts about aiming the programme more at a smaller audience had been discussed at committee.</p> <p>Other events – Verulam Radio readings. Recordings are made and exactly how they will be used on air has not yet been finalised. Podcast – discussion of writing poetry on Verulam Radio website.</p>
2.	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> None.</p>
3	<p><b>Membership Secretary’s Report – Greg Smith</b></p> <p>Currently 86 members paid up. New people join through Open – 8 this year which was typical.</p> <p>103 maximum membership during the year which is stable.</p>
4	<p><b>Treasurer’s Report –Greg Smith</b></p> <p>Profit of £164 compared to a loss of £17 last year</p> <p>Open profit £322</p> <p>Balance £7, 879.94</p>

	Stable position. There were no plans to increase subs
5	<p><b>Competition Secretary's Report- Gillian Knibbs</b></p> <p>There was a discussion around Online entry for the Open and the practicalities and costs. 'Submittable' had been explored and it was an ongoing consideration. Further changes would be made to the marketing of the Open to reduce printing and postage costs and to increase online advertising</p>
6	<p><b>Day Workshops Report</b></p> <p>Between 4 and 8 people at most workshops</p> <p>If Friday nights had a similar format, would it effect those numbers? <i>Probably wouldn't make much difference</i></p> <p>GD – is there something about Fridays? <i>Well no evening will suit everybody. If you don't have a regular slot it loses people. Day workshops are very flexible and decided by the group.</i></p> <p>GD would reflect on what being a member of Ver Poets offers and report back. TJ suggested it was not more than 20% of the membership who attended on Friday nights.</p> <p>GD commented that he was very grateful to the committee for sustaining the organisation because it was important to him and a way forward needed to be found. Seconded by John</p>
10	<p><b>Any proposal submitted by members</b></p> <p>None</p>
11	<p><b>Election of Officers and Committee Members</b></p> <p>The following were duly elected:</p> <p>Chair – Terry Jones  Membership Secretary – Greg Smith  Treasurer – Greg Smith  Competitions Secretary – Gillian Knibbs  Programme Coordinator – Vacant  Publicity Officer – Vacant  Committee members – Juliet Troy, Julian Bishop</p>
12	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>None</p>
	<b>The meeting closed at 10.06pm</b>