

**VER POETS**  
**AGM**  
**Due to Covid 19 held on Zoom**  
**on 17th September 2021**  
**(7.00 p.m )**

**MINUTES**

Chair: Gillian Knibbs  
Present: Gillian Knibbs, John Mole, Greg Smith, Stephen Claughton, Mark Randles, Anna Avebury, Jonathan Shaw, Brian Young, Pat Francis.

Apologies: Lesley Lilley, Katherine Gallagher, John Hussey, Anne Clarke, Terry Jones. Ruth Higgins, Hannah Hobsbaum, Gillian Holland,

1.	<p><b>Chair's Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chair drew attention to the fact that there were still just the four committee members and we need more help.</p> <p>The AGM will continue to be held via Zoom as it enables distant members to take part. It is planned to resume face-to-face events soon. There will be a reading in November for which Andre Mangeot, Sarah Doyle and Vanessa Lampert will be invited to read. This is likely to be at St Albans Library</p> <p>We do not plan to have regular meetings on Fridays at St Michaels meeting rooms. It was pointed out that there have not been good audiences for our readings in the last few years. We could hold some sessions such as Brian Young's workshops, maybe at St Michaels.</p> <p>Due to Covid 19, programme events had ceased in February 2020 and there would be no face to face events before November 2021. It is intended that the regular Friday monthly meetings will cease entirely and that the programme will operate on a more ad hoc basis. However a programme coordinator was needed to oversee events. A good relationship with Books on the Hill for open mic readings had been curtailed by the virus but it was hoped that this could be resumed.</p> <p>Zoom has been a positive addition in that we can reach and include more of our members to workshops and meetings and this has been one of the advantages to come out of lock down.</p> <p>MR commented that he felt that Zoom was second best and that there would be a hunger for face to face meetings when the health crisis allowed.</p>
2.	<p><b>Minutes the AGM 2020</b></p> <p>The Minutes for the above were agreed with the proviso that Anna Avebury and Brian Young were also present, but not included in the list of attendees.</p>
3	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>

	None.
4	<p><b>Membership Secretary's Report – Greg Smith</b></p> <p>Currently 73 paid up members out of 89 members. This is about the number we had last year after there had been something of a drop during that year. A final reminder was sent out with the Summer newsletter. A reminder will be sent out by email in November and non-renewals will not receive the winter newsletter.</p> <p>Ver has operated at a fairly stable 100 members for several years previously, but it looks as though this will have dropped to about 80.</p> <p>There are 9 members with no e-mail.</p>
5	<p><b>Treasurer's Report –Greg Smith</b></p> <p>The overall profit was £260.54. (last year it was £312.16.) The balance was £9377.65</p> <p>Most figures are abnormal because of the pandemic. However, the Open competition ran relatively normally. It made a profit of about £450 compared with £285 last year, but the year before it was £900, so there may be a permanent drop due to fewer entries.</p> <p>There were no concerns about overall drop in income or plans to increase the subs. We have a large balance which we could use for some purpose. It was suggested that we could use this to pay someone to administer the Open Competition.</p>
6	<p><b>Competition Secretary's Report- Gillian Knibbs</b></p> <p>There were fewer entries this year for the Open which considering the circumstances is not surprising.</p> <p>There have still been no volunteers to manage the competition. It is planned that the Open will run next year administrated by Terry with some assistance. <b>GK</b> will be stepping away from the role. It was suggested that we could use our surplus of funds to pay someone to manage the competition. We could try this to see if it works.</p> <p>There were suggestions about accepting email entries. This is a question about how it would be administrated and partly depends on the judge. Andre Mangeot had expressed his wish to receive paper entries, which means printing the poems out in duplicate; but future judges may be different.</p> <p>GK said that sending Open leaflets to numerous venues seems to result in very few entries via these leaflets. SC suggested promoting it via Twitter would be much more effective.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether to run the Ten-Liners. Last year we had just 50 poems, 22 by the same person. AA said she misses it. JS, as a new member, was surprised by this. It was suggested that we could make it free. We could also extend entry to anyone living in Hertfordshire. It was decided to continue it for this year.</p>

7	<p><b>Day Workshops Report</b></p> <p>The two workshops run by <b>GS</b> via Zoom have continued to be very successful. These individual workshops are run for :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members’ workshop of their poems</li> <li>• a discussion of a chosen poet</li> </ul> <p>It has been decided to alternate sessions for the poem workshops between Zoom sessions and meetings local to St Albans. The date of the next face-to-face workshop will be decided at the next Zoom workshop. GS would like other people to volunteer to host the face-to-face workshops to reduce the burden on him.</p> <p>We also had two informal get-togethers outdoors at the Alban’s Well in St Peters Street.</p>
11	<p><b>Any proposal submitted by members</b></p> <p>John Hussey as asked if there are any plans to start holding meetings in person. This is mentioned in other places; there will be a reading in November at St Albans Library, and local St Albans workshops will be held soon.</p> <p>Rebecca Hubbard also asked about plans to start holding workshops in person. This is discussed in item 7.</p> <p>Hannah Hobsbaum has suggested not allowing any entrant to win more than one prize. GK says that if that happened within the first three, the judge would be informed and asked to choose someone else, but this has not happened yet. Multiple poems by the same poet are allowed to be included in the anthology as we would not ask the judge to change their selection.</p>
12	<p><b>Election of Officers and Committee Members</b></p> <p>It was suggested that we could do with a Publicity Officer. JS volunteered. The following were duly elected by those present and would need to be ratified via email by the membership (ACTION GS):</p> <p>Chair – Gillian Knibbs  Membership Secretary – Greg Smith  Treasurer – Greg Smith  Competitions Secretary – Terry Jones (with assistance from volunteers)  Programme Coordinator – Vacant  Committee Members – Juliet Troy, Lesley Lilley. Mark Randles  Publicity Officer – Jonathan Shaw</p>
13	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was a general discussion about low attendances. JS suggested that we need to recruit younger members. There is a reading with John Hegley at St Albans Library on 7<sup>th</sup> October. We could use it as an opportunity to publicise Ver Poets. GS said that we could bring leaflets and some of our anthologies to give away for free.</p>

	<b>The meeting closed at 8.30pm</b>