



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Tuesday 20 October 2020 at 7.30pm

Via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions

Committee members present:

Elaine Fox (Chair), George Barnes (Vice Chair), Alan Higbey (Treasurer), Marian Adams (Secretary), Julie Bolter (Membership Secretary), Christina Butterworth (Publicity Officer) William Armitage, Glenn Butterworth, Steve Green, Jackie Sayers

LALG Members present:

Derek Blyth, Velma Burton, Ann and Bob Clarke, Andrew Dear, Betty Fox, Jackie Harber, Ann Pegrum, Val Quieros, Frances Sly, Praful Soneji, Harold and Carol Stokes, Maureen Strutt, Kate Thompson, Emma van der Veen, Jane Webb

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone and explained the arrangements for the meeting.

The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and that each household (not each member in a household) had one vote.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sheila George and Natalie Guy.

3. Approval of minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 26 November 2019

Approval was conducted by Zoom Poll. The results were:

Yes	74%
No	-
Abstain	26%

The minutes were therefore approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising not covered under other agenda items

There were none.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair reported as follows:

"I took over as Chair after last year's AGM, expecting to build on George Barnes' good work by gradually increasing membership numbers and improving the diversity of our Members to better reflect the population of North Herts and Central Beds. We just got underway when we started to hear about a strange new virus, and that rather changed things.

It became clear that during lockdown LALG could not function as it had in the past. So we subscribed to Zoom and moved what we could online. We organised a monthly quiz. We introduced online temporary membership as we did not want anyone to feel isolated. We made renewals as safe and secure as we could for both the Membership Team and Members. We set up forums on the website so people could share ideas, photographs, anything to keep us going. We offered a telephone chat service to those who were not online. We introduced new sorts of events to give us something to do whilst we could not get out. Some of these initiatives were very successful –for example, online talks were very popular. But the social activities of bingo, beetle and virtual coffee mornings did not find an audience. We also spent a lot of time digesting government guidance (with particular thanks to Christina Butterworth for her help on this) and advising our group contacts and Members on what we could and could not do.

For an organisation that relies solely on volunteers, we did a lot very quickly and I would like to say a really big thank you to everyone who made it happen.

Over the summer there was a faint glimmer of things getting back to normal a bit. We could meet, socially distanced and within the government guidelines. Some outside activities got underway. But the number of COVID-19 cases started to creep up again, new restrictions were introduced, and it became clear that we were in it for the long haul this winter.

I am immensely proud to say that yet again our volunteers stepped up and we were able to expand our range of talks and make them a weekly event and we are now trying our hand at concert promotion. We may not always have done everything perfectly but we have got things done.

Meanwhile group contacts are finding innovative ways to keep in touch via Zoom, WhatsApp, small group meetings and events outdoors. Thank you to all group contacts for your efforts.

As you can see from the survey results (set out in annex A), and thanks to all those who participated in it, the majority of our Members who responded thought we were doing a good job, by giving us marks of 4 or 5.

As I have said we would not have seen such a positive response without the contribution of a lot of people. The Webtech Team, the Web Editors, the Newsletter Editors, the Membership Team, the Publicity Team, the Events team, the Group Support Team and every individual who stepped forward when the call went out for help.

I would like to make mention of the following people who are stepping back now but have made a special contribution to LALG over a number of years:

- **John Gregory** who for years ran the Membership Team and was a founding member of the team that keeps our website up to date.

- **Robin Edmett** who for years ran the Sunday Ramblers group.
- **Maureen Strutt** who is stepping down from the Committee and from coordinating our discount suppliers, but she will remain on our Social Team and helping to organise our monthly Members' meetings.
- **Julie Bolter** who will be stepping down as our current Membership Secretary.

I would also like to thank the other Committee members who stood down during this year: Val Quieros, John Cox, Astrid Hansen and Sheila George.

To them and every other volunteer who is leaving us – a very big thank you for all your hard work. We could not have done it without you.”

6. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer presented the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020. He reported as follows:

“The year ended 31 July 2020 has been negative from a cash flow point of view, with the amount held in LALG’s bank account reducing from £28,500 to £24,500.

Membership income reduced by just over £7,000 with some of this being due to a change in the way we recognise this income for accounting purposes, something I mentioned in my report last year. There was, however also a small decline in membership numbers.

During the year, we did manage to earn interest of £320 on deposits held with Redwood Bank. This bank is FSCS protected so our funds are completely safe.

Overall income for the year totalled £19,454. Membership monies of £16,574 still formed the bulk of our income. Advertising in the newsletters raised a further £890 and Social Team events raised £1,280, although the latter showed a loss after taking into consideration costs of £1,937. This was due to the impact of COVID-19 on our ability to put on events that would have generated income. However, the halt in the production of our printed newsletter reduced printing costs from £15,500 last year to £12,000 this year.

COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in a period of change for LALG. We have deliberately chosen not to charge for the different way in which we have interacted with our Members, with the major change being the use of Zoom to create virtual meetings for events, groups and also for the Committee and its teams!

Overall, this has been a mixed year for LALG but one where we have been able to stand still ready for a return to calmer waters when COVID-19 is less of a disruption to normal life.

I commend this report, and the accounts for the year ended 31 July 2020, to the Meeting.”

7. Formal approval of accounts for year ended 31 July 2020

Approval was conducted by Zoom Poll. The results were:

Yes	94%
No	-
Abstain	6%

The accounts were therefore approved.

8. Membership Secretary's Report

The Membership Secretary reported as follows:

“Our membership numbers continue to be relatively stable although, inevitably, we have not attracted as many new members as usual this year. At the date of this report we have 1,350 households registered as LALG Members. About 29% of our membership opt to have their newsletter delivered by email which is slightly up on last year's percentage of 26%. As we can now register individual members within households we know that we have at least 2,022 Members.

We were delighted that so many Members acted on our plea to renew their membership this year either by paying online with a debit or credit card or by bank transfer. Over 70% of renewals were made using one of these methods. We do still accept payments by cheque and, if absolutely necessary, by cash but would hope to see payments made by either of these methods decline further next year. We continue to be very grateful to the staff in David's Bookshop for their assistance in acting as our post box.

We moved over completely to our new membership system earlier this year. Once again, I would like to say a big thank you to the Webtech Team and, in particular, Tony Maynard-Smith for all their help. Whilst we did have a few teething problems with the new system it is now working well.

One advantage of the new system is that Members can now have their own individual membership card rather than sharing one across the household. Members who have registered for online access can also now update their own data, request a replacement card and renew their membership themselves. This gives Members more autonomy.

In moving to the new membership system, it was necessary to reset membership numbers so that each individual Member could have their own number rather than a number being allocated to the household, as in the old system. We did not realise quite how attached some of our Members were to their old numbers as this change triggered a number of emails and phone calls. My apologies to those Members who have lost a familiar number but the change was necessary.

Finally, I must thank the other two members of the Membership Team, Kathryn Maher and Paul Ansbro, for all the time that they put into ensuring membership matters run as smoothly as possible particularly during the peak renewal period in August and September.”

9. Election of Committee members (including members retiring by rotation and offering themselves for re-election and members appointed by the Committee during the year and offering themselves for election)

Nominations were as follows:

Name	Proposer	Secunder
William Armitage*	Nigel Carrick	Sheila George
Derek Blyth	Elaine Fox	Ann Pegrum
Velma Burton	Elaine Fox	Marian Adams
Christina Butterworth**	Alan Higbey	Graham Wood

Name	Proposer	Seconder
Glenn Butterworth**	William Armitage	Alan Higbey
Natalie Guy	William Armitage	Sheila George
Jackie Harber	Jackie Sayers	Stan Crouch
Jackie Sayers*	Jackie Harber	Marian Adams
Emma van der Veen	Elaine Fox	Christina Butterworth

* Retiring by rotation and standing for re-election

** Appointed by Committee during year

The nominations were read out and the motion to elect them on bloc was proposed by George Barnes and seconded by Alan Higbey.

The election was conducted by Zoom Poll. The results were:

Yes	95%
No	-
Abstain	5%

Those nominated were therefore elected.

The Chair welcomed the new Committee members. She also noted that there was still one vacancy on the Committee, and a new Membership Secretary was still needed if none of the new Committee members wanted to take on this role.

10. New logo

The Publicity Officer introduced LALG's new logo (presentation slides set out in Annex B) as follows:

"It is a pleasure to showcase the new LALG branding and logo.

We have been working with a local graphic designer to produce a brand and logo that can represent LALG for many years to come.

A number of designs for the logo were developed and sent out for consultation. We had some great feedback with the majority of people choosing the tree logo, as it not only represents the garden city but also strength, growth and wisdom. They also wanted the logo to contain the full name.

We hope that this new logo and branding will be easily definable as being that of Letchworth Arts & Leisure Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little more about branding and how we will be using it.

Branding is a marketing practice in which a company creates a name, symbol or design that is easily identifiable as belonging to that company.

Potential Members are far more likely to choose a brand that they recognize over something unfamiliar, even if they do not know a great deal about LALG at the time.

This helps to identify us and distinguish us from other community groups.

Branding is important because not only is it what makes a memorable impression on Members but it allows our Members to know what to expect from LALG. It also helps us to promote new activities and events.

Our brand is built to be a true representation of who we are as an organisation, and how we wish to be perceived. Having a strong, well-known brand enhances our credibility with members, and the community as a whole.

A professional appearance and well defined branding will help LALG build trust with Members, potential Members and our wider customer base. People are more likely to get involved with an organisation that has a polished and professional portrayal.

Branding consists of the logo, typeface, colour palette, graphics, presentation and guidance on how it is used outside of the organisation.

The logo is the most important element of branding, especially where this factor is concerned, as it is essentially the face of the organisation.

Attention spans are short these days – especially consumers.

As things stand, organisations have about two seconds to convince potential customers that their products are worth any consideration.

A logo can quickly grab viewers' attention.

This first impression is our way to immediately communicate ownership over the activities and events we deliver.

A good logo is a visual, aesthetically pleasing element, it triggers positive recall about our brand that our name alone might not.

Without a logo (and one that stands out), then we are missing an opportunity to make LALG stick in the minds of our audience.

The November newsletter which has just been published uses the new logo.

Over time we will be developing new material, including using different colours to create seasonal themes.”

Kate Thompson commented that the new logo was clean and uncluttered, a view shared by others present who agreed that it was very good. It was also noted that in the past there had been some resistance to changing the old logo, but the Committee had agreed that it was difficult to know exactly what the old one represented and had felt that LALG needed a more defined “brand”.

The Chair thanked the Publicity Officer for her work on the new logo.

11. Strategic plan 2020

The Chair reported as follows:

“Over the summer the Committee, otherwise meeting via Zoom, had a socially distanced meeting to discuss LALG strategy.

Unsurprisingly we confirmed the three previous strategic aims of LALG:

- Growth in membership with increased diversity
- Attract and nurture volunteers
- Adapt to changing needs of our membership

But we added a fourth aim:

- Encourage LALG connections

We believe that we can deliver more for our Members by creating mutually beneficial arrangements with complementary external communities, and by enhancing the natural communities within LALG such as between walking, book and wine groups.

We are already partnering with the Settlement for the concert series and are on the lookout for how we can bring arts and leisure activities to our Members from other organisations in our neighbourhood.

We will be discussing the action plan with the new Committee at our first meeting in November.”

12. Any Other Business

None previously advised.

William Armitage suggested that it would be useful to have a standard talk about LALG to give to other organisations.

The Treasurer noted three LALG Committee members (himself, the Secretary and the Publicity Officer) were also members of the Settlement Management Committee. This was helping to forge links between the two organisations. He also noted that there were still a few tickets left to physically attend the jointly arranged concert taking place in Kincaid Hall at the Settlement (COVID-19 safe and legal) on Friday 23 October, or attendance could be via Zoom. The Chair noted that considerable time had been spent to ensure that the experience of joining via Zoom would be maximised.

A number of Members expressed their appreciation and thanks to everyone involved in organising the various initiatives during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Finally, the Secretary, on behalf of the Members, thanked the Chair for her hard work during the year, especially during the COVID-19 restrictions.

13. Date of 2021 Annual General Meeting

Confirmed as Tuesday 19 October 2021.

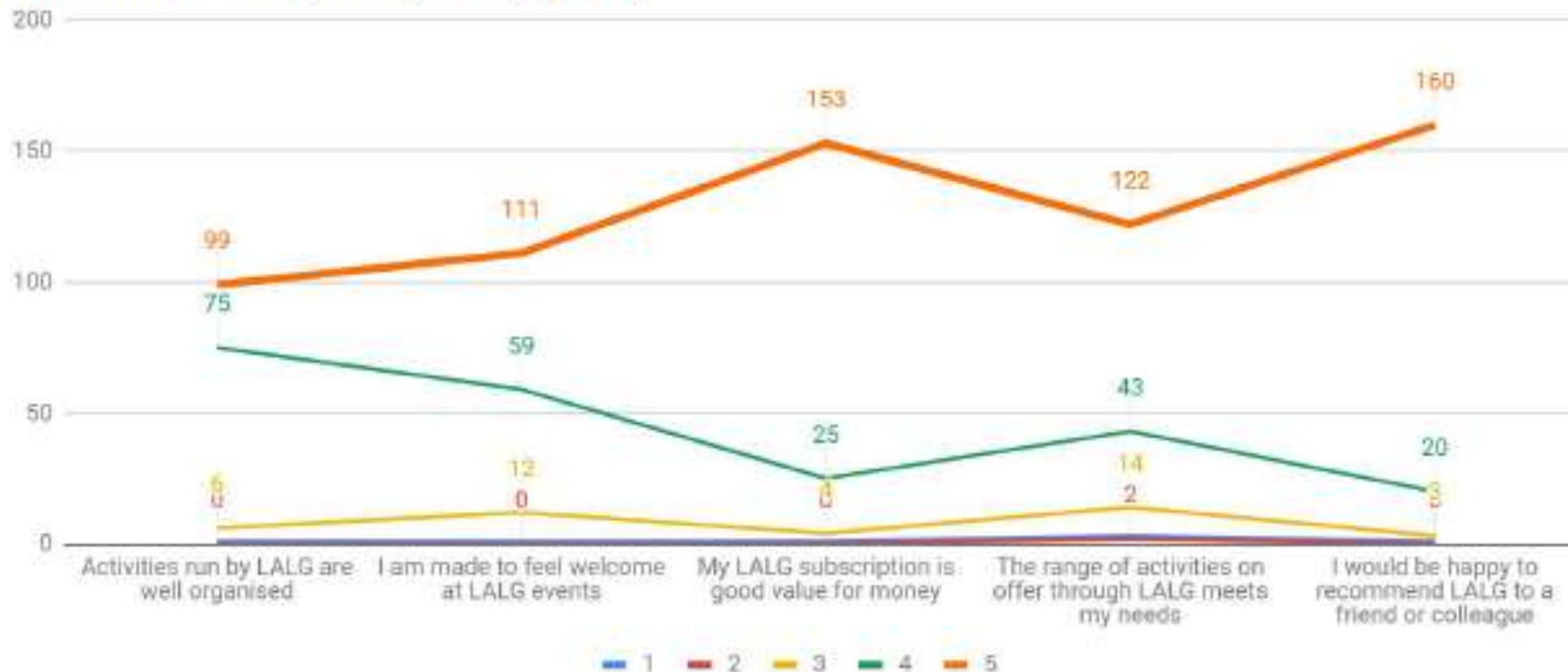
The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and Jackie Sayers for being the Zoom host. The meeting closed at 8.19pm.

**These minutes were approved at the 2021 Annual General Meeting, and signed
by the Chair, on 19 October 2021**

ANNEX A: SURVEY RESULTS

MEMBER FEEDBACK

Statements rated 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)



ANNEX B: NEW LOGO



Branding and logos

Launch 21st October 2020



Brand

Purpose

- Get recognized and generate new membership

Benefits

- Easily identifiable as belonging to LALG
- Memorable impression
- True representation of who we are and how we want to be perceived



Why is a logo important?

- grabs attention,
- makes a strong first impression,
- is the foundation of our brand identity, is memorable,
- separates us from our competition,
- fosters brand loyalty,
- is expected by our audience.



Banners



LALG
LETCHWORTH ARTS & LEISURE GROUP

Volunteering opportunities with LALG

Publicity team members
Volunteers needed for a variety of roles - writing, editing, proof-reading, photography and people-facing. Would suit anyone with a good eye for detail. Training and support provided.

Website team members
Volunteers needed for a variety of roles - writing, editing, proof-reading, photography and people-facing. Would suit anyone with a good eye for detail. Training and support provided.

Committee members
Volunteers are needed as general committee members to get involved in any projects that interest them. Monthly meetings are 7.30pm to 9.30pm at the Settlement.

Refreshments team
Volunteers needed to help make hot drinks at social events such as the Monday Morning meetings at the Settlement.

For more details about any of these, call Jackie Sayers on 07970 407935 or email publicity@LALG.org.uk

LALG will not pass your information to anyone else.

LALG
LETCHWORTH ARTS & LEISURE GROUP

Volunteering opportunities with LALG

Publicity team members
Volunteers needed for a variety of roles - behind the scenes and people-facing. Would suit anyone interested in promoting LALG. Training and support is provided.

Website team members
Volunteers needed for a variety of web-related activities - updating content, maintaining systems. Some roles need almost no web experience and training is provided.

Committee members
Volunteers are needed as general committee members to get involved in any projects that interest them. Monthly meetings are 7.30pm to 9.30pm attending when you can.

Refreshments team
Volunteers needed to help make hot drinks at social events such as the Monday Morning meetings at the Settlement.

For more details about any of these, call Jackie Sayers on 07970 407935 or email publicity@LALG.org.uk

LALG will not pass your information to anyone else.

Promotional materials



LALG LETCHWORTH ARTS & LEISURE GROUP

Seasonal highlights

Winter
❖ Talk
❖ Tour

Spring
❖ Quiz
❖ Concert

Summer
❖ Golf tournament
❖ Walk

Autumn
❖ Barn dance
❖ Xmas fayre

Seasonal features