



SEAHORSE



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Newsletter of the Friends of the Midland Hotel, Morecambe

This year, due to the very poor weather conditions at the beginning of the year, we took the decision to hold our AGM in March and may I take this opportunity to thank those who attended. Some fifty members joined the committee in the Oliver Hill function room, several taking the opportunity of spending a weekend at the hotel. Lucky people!

The manager of the Midland, Matt Stanaway, gave a presentation on the plans that ELH have for the hotel, an insight into the other ELH establishments, and answered questions from members. At the meeting we found out that Urban Splash had again made a planning application for blocks of apartments adjacent to the hotel. The previous application was in 2008 but did not reach the full planning committee. We asked Urban Splash for the closest buildings to the hotel to be omitted as we considered they were detrimental to the original setting of the hotel. We also asked for the wall to be retained in its intended position and form. Both requests have been ignored - the apartment blocks remain and the wall, albeit not completely removed, will be partially demolished and remodelled. This is still highly unsatisfactory as it totally changes the intended footprint of the hotel as designed by Oliver Hill.

Thanks to all of you who sent written comments/objections to the Chief Planning Officer of Lancaster City Council following our mail shot. There was a quickly arranged meeting at the Clarendon Hotel in Morecambe several weeks ago just to get a feel of what people thought about this development, with prospective Labour and Conservative candidates attending. It was packed and people certainly made their opinions heard. The overwhelming opinion of the meeting was 'no' to the development where it is proposed. Several people made the point that the old Frontierland site is still vacant and in urgent need of development so that is where Urban Splash should go!

Another, more structured, public meeting is to be held on Sunday 13th June in the Winter Gardens, starting at 2.30 pm. We hope the full plans will be on display with representatives from Urban Splash and Lancaster City Council in attendance. Come along if you can.

If you wish to look at the comments already made to the Council concerning the planning application go to LCC's website at <http://planapps.lancaster.gov.uk/PublicAccess> The reference number for the scheme is 07/01810/OUT.

On a pleasanter note, don't forget to apply for your Relish card on the English Lakes website. There are some excellent discounts available to cardholders in the restaurants of all ELH establishments. From time to time Relish card holders are also offered room and dinner deals so

get your card. We have also asked about a discount on the room rates at the Midland for the Friends but no news on that yet.

This year the Midland Events team has planned quite a few events at the hotel such as jazz nights, murder mysteries, summer balls, etc, and we will be updating the website with details. We can recommend these events and will be on the sinking Titanic at the mercy of a murder mystery in June! Hope to see you at one of the functions.

Finally, please note that the password to gain access to the Members' Area of the Friends' website has been changed – see page 7.

Once again, thank you all for your continued support.

Sue Thompson

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MIDLAND HOTEL HELD ON FRIDAY 26th MARCH 2010 AT THE MIDLAND HOTEL, MORECAMBE

Before the business of the AGM Sue introduced Matt Stanaway, the manager of the Midland, who gave a short talk outlining developments at the hotel since English Lakes Hotels took over its running in May 2009 and the progress he has made since being appointed manager last October. He told the meeting that bookings were strong and that the hotel was hosting numerous special events throughout the coming year, including weddings and themed evenings. A number of new staff had been appointed with several moving to the hotel from within ELH and Matt was confident that they were on track to take the hotel forward. He outlined the history of how the ELH brand had been established many years ago and how the company was growing and constantly seeking to improve. He concluded by answering questions from members and Sue thanked him for attending the meeting.

Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last AGM had been sent out to members and been posted on the Friends' website. Copies were also available at the meeting if members wished to see them. They were certified by the secretary as being a true and accurate record of the last meeting. Their acceptance was proposed by Ron Sands and seconded by Neil Byers.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

Chairperson's Report

Having thanked Matt for his talk Sue said that the Friends would try to help English Lakes Hotels by spreading the word about the Midland to friends and colleagues, encouraging them to use its facilities whenever they could.

Whilst Sue was addressing the meeting news came in that Urban Splash had just re-submitted its planning application for the development immediately adjacent to the Midland, plus the remodelling of the hotel's Grade 2 listed perimeter wall and gate piers designed by Oliver Hill. It was apparent that the height and proximity of the building blocks closest to the hotel had not

been altered from Urban Splash's previous submission in 2008 which the Friends had objected to. Sue told the meeting that she would keep members up to date with developments and that it was likely that we would again object to the scheme. Information would be sent out to members to bring the planning application to their attention. She reiterated the need to keep the Friends group going to look after the interests of the hotel in this and any future matters.

Sue ended by telling the meeting about the Relish Card Scheme introduced by English Lakes Hotels which gave discounts to card holders for meals in the Rotunda Bar and in other ELH hotels. New offers would be published from time to time by ELH. The card was free to applicants and details were on both the Friends and ELH websites.

Treasurer's Report

Barry presented the end of year report to the meeting which showed a balance of funds of £483.83. Income was mainly from membership renewals and new membership fees. Expenditure was made up of outlays for the Friends' website, the production and postage of newsletters, and holding the AGM. There was also a small cost for the hire of a musical group for the Friends' weekend held in July.

At the time of the AGM, membership of the Friends stood at approximately 200 but more renewals were expected.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Sue Thompson and seconded by Stephen Jones.

Election of Officers

The Secretary asked if anyone wished to be considered for any of the main posts. As nobody wished to do so, it was unanimously accepted that the existing officers would serve for a further year.

Chairperson	Sue Thompson
Vice Chair	Jane Wright
Secretary	Ian Thompson
Treasurer	Barry Guise
Membership Secretary	Lesley Guise

Committee members: Pam Brook, Neil Byers, Stephen Jones and Peter Wade.

Howard Landey said he would like to join the committee. He was proposed by Sue Thompson and seconded by Shelley Rubinstein. There were no objections and Howard was duly elected.

Any Other Business

Pam Brook said there had been a ruling in the past from the Secretary of State regarding the Eric Gill relief being treated as part of the 2* listed building. She could see no reason why the perimeter wall and gate piers should not fall into the same category.

Sue asked Pam to put the content of the ruling onto an email and she would follow it up.

Ron Sands made the point that a red plaque had been attached to the wall and questioned whether or not it was appropriate.

There being no other business, Sue closed the meeting by saying refreshments would be served to be followed by a film show from Chris Abraham.

Ian Thompson

