

I would like to welcome everyone tonight and present my first Annual report as Chair having followed in Moira's footsteps.

This year has been a successful one for the History Society, we have a vibrant membership on paper 86 members. As a result of this we are maintaining our membership fee at £10 per annum although inevitably hire costs and speaker fees are rising rapidly in the current economic climate. That said, as you hear in the financial report, thanks to positive membership numbers and good attendance figures by non-members the society is in a good financial position, hence why the committee has chosen on this occasion not to raise membership fees. We will be sending out an email in September with information and details of how to pay for the 2023-2024 season, which commences on Monday 2nd October.

Attendance at individual meetings fluctuates with an average attendance of 47 with the highest audience of 74 members for the talk in December by John Saddler on the Jacobites. I am sure the free Xmas drink had nothing to do with the popularity of this particular lecture!

I think we have all enjoyed the variety this season's programme brought us and we look forward to our first History Society Day out at Wallington Hall on Tuesday the 13th June and ask for those member's wishing to attend to confirm their details if not already done.

I am very grateful to the **Committee** for their hard work and I'd like to thank them all.

Barry Jones our vice chair

Kathryn McLachlan our secretary

Anne Cashmore our Treasurer

Peter Scott committee member

And a special thanks to **Jill and Jed Wharton, and Lindy Conway**, who manage our refreshments at meetings

I would like to make a special thank you to **Moira Kilkenny** who kindly agreed to remain on the committee and support me in my role as new chair to ensure a seamless handover as well as providing her expert knowledge around potential speakers for the forthcoming programme as well as providing a comfortable venue for our committee meetings.

Thank you, Moira.

We were sad to announce the death of Les Purvis who died earlier this year. He had retired from the committee last year and had been instrumental in the setting up and maintenance of the Warkworth History Society Website.

We are currently however unable to access the Warkworth History website and this has left us with a challenge for the coming year. If there are any members with website expertise willing to assist with this matter please let me know.

We as a Society have engaged and supported other local organizations. In December last year we supported the Christmas Tree Festival at St Lawrence's Church with a suffragette themed Xmas tree. More recently we supported the Memorial Hall fund raising coffee morning by running the raffle stand. Members of the Society kindly donated prizes and I am happy to report that the raffle raised £76 in funds for the Hall.

I would also like to thank the **Pelican** who play a vital role in disseminating all the information about our programme and activities. We have accordingly made a donation of £50.

In a minute I will ask Anne Cashmore to give us a brief financial report. I would however also like to take this opportunity to thank Anne for her hard work as treasurer for the last 13 years as she has decided to retire from this position.

The **programme** for next year has been completed and I have copies for each of you tonight.

Before we move onto our talk for this evening could I ask if there are any issues or questions from the floor? We are always open to suggestions and ideas for our meetings.

Our short talk tonight is titled 'Hidden gems of Northumberland' presented by myself and will give an overview of some of the 'hidden gems' discovered on my wanderings across the beautiful Northumberland countryside.