

Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the IBMT Southampton Civic Centre 9 October 2021

In attendance: Mike Arnott, David Chanter, Paul Coles, Roland Davies, Megan Dobney, Pauline Fraser, Mary Greening, John Haywood, Myra Hunter, Hilary Jones, Jim Jump, Dennis Lenihan, Alan Lloyd, Dolores Long, Jim McGarrol, David McKnight, Simon Montfalcon, Manuel Moreno, Des Mullaney, Frieda Park, Beth Richards, Nik Roberts, David Sherlock Jones, Marlene Sidaway, Ernest Walker, Lynda Walker, Stuart Walsh, Ajmal Waqif, Paul Ward

1 Chair's opening remarks

Chair Jim Jump welcomed everyone and praised Alan Lloyd's talk on the Hampshire Brigaders that had been delivered in the morning. It was superb and the personal stories were engrossing. He extended thanks to Alan and Beth Richards for organising the weekend. He thanked Unite and RMT for their sponsorship of the events, the City Council and everyone for coming. He remarked that it was brilliant that it was not on Zoom!

Apologies: Terry Bayes, Richard Baxell, Margaret Bruton, Colin Carritt, Lisa Croft, Ciaran Crossey, Alex Gordon, Jonathan Havard, Duncan Longstaff, Meirian Jump, Marshall Mateer, Piers & Margaret McKenna, John Millington, Eddie Redmond, Tom Sibley, Mike Wild

The Chair read out greetings from Almudena Cros, President of Asociación de Amigos de las Brigadas Internacionales (AABI).

Dear friends of the IBMT,

We send you our warmest greetings from Madrid, wishing you a successful AGM and all the best with your work to commemorate the legacy of the brave men and women who stood up to Fascism in the UK and later in Spain in 1936 and afterwards. Their sacrifices cannot go forgotten, and, as we are painfully aware these days of our own mortality, we must work together to ensure that the International Brigades go on living in the hearts of the future generations.

We send our solidarity and deep condolences to the family and friends of our beloved Manus O'Riordan. This year we lost the last surviving veteran of the International Brigades, Josep Almudéver. A few months later, one of the clearest voices out there defending the history and the honour of the International Brigades died with Manus. Yet, his powerful writings remain, and his history lessons will not die out.

Please, let's work together to ensure that the anti-fascist volunteers remain relevant and alive in the collective memory and the shared history of Spain and the UK.

We welcome visitors to our anniversary weekend in Madrid (5-7 November) and to the Jarama March 2022 (18-20 February).

No pasarán!

The Chair asked us to remember Josep Almudéver who died in May at the age of 101. He was one of the Spaniards who volunteered to join the International Brigades.

In September we lost Chris Birch, 93, who had been a very significant figure in the anti-Franco movement during the 1950s and a member of the Aid to Spanish Youth Committee. He had been Treasurer of the International Brigade Memorial Appeal for our memorial in Jubilee Gardens.

IBMT Trustee Manus O’Riordan died in September aged 72. Marshall Mateer was thanked for putting together a film tribute at such short notice. Manus had been a Trustee of the IBMT from 2002 onwards. From 2010 he was the Ireland Secretary.

Ernest Walker paid tribute to Manus. Lynda and he had been with Manus at an event shortly before his death. Manus had been remembered by fans of Bohemian FC, a local football team, at their recent match in Dublin.

The meeting then watched Marshall Mateer’s tribute to Manus.

3 **The minutes of the 2020 AGM** were approved.

4 **Matters arising** none

5 **Executive Committee report**

Secretary Megan Dobney introduced Ajmal Waqif, our Executive Officer, to those who had not met him.

Membership showed an encouraging rise over the last year to 976 from 913.

John Haywood had organised the raffle and there was still an opportunity to buy more tickets. The raffle will be drawn at dinner.

Megan would be meeting with Sheffield City Council reps shortly and we are working with a sculptor to put up a statue of Picasso in that city. Megan said she was grateful to all the work that members do.

6 **Finance report April 2020 to March 2021**

Jim introduced Paul Coles, the IBMT Treasurer. Paul thanked the accountants for preparing our financial statement.

There was a net loss of £7,430.61 which was close to the budget’s expectation and income had been curtailed by the pandemic.

Paul proposed Sloane and Co as accountants for 2022-2023. This was agreed.

Gift Aid stream has grown significantly. We have received £4,342.41 from HMRC for the current year. Bank charges are from Caf Bank, Paypal and Eazipay. Banking is not cheap, he remarked.

The Financial Report was accepted.

7 Election of four Executive Committee members

This year Alan Lloyd, Dolores Long, Manus O’Riordan and Pauline Fraser had to step down from Committee, but were able to stand for 2022-2024. Pauline decided that she would step down after 20 years on the Committee as a founding member of the IBMT. The other three had been re-nominated. James Bentley, an active member of the Hull IB Committee and grandson of a Brigadier, had also been nominated.

The meeting voted to accept the four nominations. The recommendation was accepted to refer to the EC the filling of Manus’ place on the Committee.

8 Date and place of 2022 AGM

President Marlene Sidaway proposed having the next AGM on Teesside. She said that the Battle of Stockton group were very well organised. There would be lots to see and do in the area and, if no one else offered, they would probably organise the event.

Dolores Long suggested Manchester could be a back-stop for the next AGM if Teesside fell through.

Manuel Moreno said that Leeds was important for the Brigaders, but the point was made that there needed to be a committed group to organise it.

The date of the next AGM would be either 8 or 15 October 2022.

9 Any other business

Mike Arnott said that last year we were within weeks of holding the Len Crome Conference 2020 when it became apparent that lockdown would prevent it taking place. The IBMT would like it to be in Edinburgh as Len Crome was an alumnus there. John Dunlop and another Brigadier had also been alumni. Edinburgh University is the preferred venue for 2022 but this is still being negotiated. There are other venues that would be prepared to host.

In 2021 there was a Zoom webinar in place of the Len Crome Conference. The Chair said it was hoped that Paul Preston, Richard Baxell and Helen Graham would be prepared to repeat this next year as it attracted a worldwide audience of more than 180.

Marlene suggested that the IBMT join the Kinder Scout Trespass anniversary commemoration next year.