

Secretary's 2020 Report or as it has been - Acting Secretary.  
Welcome to you all to our online AGM. A first, so very special too.

I have been reflecting on my last year's report . Pause

In it I mentioned the future of the Society and that we hoped that it would be around for many years to come!

I also reminded us all that we are only caretakers of the society and that everything we do will help secure the society for the future and for those who follow us.

Well this year your committee has sure had to do just that, step up to the mark. I believe this year will go down as one of its most testing times in its history.

During this time

Many of us feel the nostalgia of the physical meetings, where new friendships were made.

Sharing a chat over a hot drink that was provided and always with a smile by Pam and Cathy.

For those of our members who were able to attend, looked forward to those evenings.

2020 began and were able to hold the January and February meetings.

At the beginning of February I had to have an emergency operation which put me out of action for a while. So at this time I would like to say a special thank you to the committee for their support during this time and also for throughout the year

By March of course Covid 19 was amongst us. The physical meetings were no longer an option as we went into lockdown.

So there were two choices.

- 1) We could choose to sit it out and hope that it was soon over?
- 2) Or we could get on with the constitution and do the best we could to continue to provide a service to our members.

Many societies chose option 1) And that would have been the easier pathway to take. Do nothing and ride it out.

In March we could not hold our committee meeting either but lots of contact was made by phone and email to try and find a way through in order to continue.

We decided to look at the possibility of online meetings and this route was explored. Lots of research into the types, the costs, security etc? So these steps were not taken on lightly.

By April the Committee trialled Zoom Us and held our first committee meeting under lockdown using the free package of 40 minutes and so we ran 2 consecutively to make the 80 minutes that we needed.

We did have a few hitches but under the circumstances it worked well.

Also in our thoughts were that many of our members live alone and so we considered the impact that some of our members may have been feeling; the effects of being locked down more than others.

We wanted to see if we could get members actively engaged to help us all through the Lockdown.

We turned to FaceBook as there are many of our members on there and the 'CADFHS Member Forum' was launched on April 13th along with this members were offered help to get onto FaceBook which several of you have taken up. This offer is still available too.

In preparation of an online meeting planned now for June we survey our members.

The Survey asked about online meetings and going forward what price our members were prepared to pay.

Out of 40 replies only 7 negative responses were received. Four of these have since joined an online meeting. 8 said maybe but I would like to know more and 25 said they were very interested. The majority said they would be happy to pay £3.00.

Coffee and a chat, weekly afternoon meetings were launched also online in May..

At first this was to help people to get online and to feel comfortable with it. Those joining in were able to discuss anything they wanted, even the weather, that was ok too.

More than 30 of our members have taken part so far. The feedback that we have had has been very positive and the group is now more Family History focused and is members helping each other. Brick walls have been tumbling down. I think we all have more knowledge than when it began.

We have been asked that this continue into the future when the new normal begins.

By now we held a ZOOM Us Licence and it was decided that the first online and the June meeting could now take place. I was asked to provide a talk and this was going to be free for our members. We had 30 members take part so think we can say it was a success.

As you can imagine it has been a very busy year and we also have a new project for our members to take part in. This involves researching and creating stories about the many paupers that died in the workhouse. We have calculated that there are more than 9000 of them buried in our cemetery and churchyards. We have lots of members taking part and 6 stories have been completed so far which is amazing as are the stories too.

Surveys and responses.

As you are aware we send out an member annual survey, however this year we have sent out more. Our membership is first and foremost and we need to keep listening to you. You have a voice and so by answering the surveys we can see your comments.

Using the responses, the committee aims to their best; Reacts to the majority of member needs.

**And now little about our 2020 Annual Fair that should** on the 23rd of May.

It is now rescheduled to take place on the 8th of May 2021. And for now that is all we can hope for.

By then we may be able to offer an alternative should the social distancing still be an issue.

The theme for 2021 will remain as Old & Curious Occupations. So I hope that your contributions / projects for our 'CADFHS' themed display will all be ready for then.

An update re the members only area of our website.

The website has been there and working all the time but access to the member only area has been a challenge and that was to keep it secure.

It has been a hard slog for us to find someone who would help us resolve an issue. Most of them want to do a new and entire website, and not just help to mend the bit that that was broken. Finally we found someone we could reach out to and they have helped us to get the Member Only Area up and running after a long spell without it.

This is thanks to a company called ChoosePurple who I think deserves a mention. They stepped in and offered a helping hand.

Finally

I'd like to add that as a society we have embraced the 2020 challenge.

We have been proactive and reactive to the changes that were needed for the survival of the society when many are failing and even folding.

Thank you.

Dena Fanshawe