

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association of the Robert Owen Memorial Museum held on Friday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025 preceded by a meeting of the Robert Owen Museum Council of Management**

### **1. Robert Owen Museum Council of Management meeting**

**Present:** Rex Shayler (Chair), Ann Evans, Dewi Hughes, Colin Laker (*ex officio*, minute taker). Present online: David Smith, Norman Davies.

Rex introduced two new prospective COM members: Jim Burton and Peter Wyn Williams (who sent his apologies due to illness)

Norman presented the annual audited accounts. It was proposed by Dewi and seconded by Rex that the COM accept these accounts. This was carried unanimously.

### **2. Annual General Meeting of the Association of the Robert Owen Memorial Museum**

**Present:** Rex Shayler (Chair), Ann Evans, Dewi Hughes, Colin Laker, Jim Burton, Gill Bridgwater, Andy Newham, Sarah Sanford, Anne Grieve. Present online: Gillian Lonergan, David Smith, Norman Davies.

Apologies for absence from Peter Wyn Williams, Penny Harris.

The **minutes** of the previous AGM were agreed as a true record.

**There were no matters arising** from the minutes.

**Election of Committee of Management:** Nomination papers had been received from Rex Shayler, David Smith, Ann Evans, Peter Wyn Williams, Gill Bridgwater, Dewi Hughes and Jim Burton. Norman Davies had posted his. All nominations were accepted by the meeting.

**Confirmation of Officers:** Officers were confirmed as: Chair: Rex Shayler, Treasurer: Norman Davies, Secretary: Sarah Sanford, Curator: Colin Laker, Librarian: Dewi Hughes, Education and Community Officer: Adam Morris, Assistant Secretary: Anne Grieve.

**Chair's Report:** Rex noted that footfall to the Museum was up, as were donations. There were several supportive comments about the Museum in the visitors' book, with little in the way of criticism. Rex had done several local talks about the Museum and Robert Owen, which had been well received. The book compiled from the donated filmstrip and booklets was currently in the press. A Project Manager was to be appointed shortly for the Sarah Brisco House Transformation Project, which had got the go-ahead from the Lottery bid to do so. There would be particular emphasis on disabled access in the Project, which would involve the extension and reorganisation of the Museum, though the particular details had still to be negotiated.

**Treasurer's Report:** Norman reported on the financial position of the Museum, the accounts to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 having been considered and approved by the COM earlier. Current holdings were just below £30,000. There had been a significant increase in donations in addition to the £3,000 annual contribution from the Co-op Heritage Legacy Fund. Overall, the financial situation was healthy. The report and the full accounts would be available on the Museum website.

**Curator's Report:** Colin reported that the **Museum Redesign**, working with JPDS of Wrexham and with part-funding from Welsh Government as part of the RO250 project, had been completed and a special celebratory event had been held on November 9<sup>th</sup> last year. This had achieved a key long term strategic aim of the Museum in having a fully bilingual display, as well as fresh content and design. **New Publications** had been produced: updated and extended 'Life of Robert Owen' and 'Museum Guide'

booklets, with the latter reflecting some of the new content in the Museum display, as well as a Fersiwm Cymraeg of the Museum Guide, the first fully Welsh publication which we have produced. Sales will be monitored of the latter to see whether it warrants reprinting beyond its original 100 copies. **Artefacts and documents** continue to ‘emerge’: the filmstrip and booklets will shortly go on display, as will the original Visitors’ Book from the opening in 1929, which will be added to the Co-op Heritage display case dedicated to that subject.

**Birthday Celebrations:** Dewi outlined that Owen’s birthday would be celebrated on Saturday May 17<sup>th</sup> this year at 11 am. It was also the bicentenary of the establishment of New Harmony in 1825. Dewi had already ordered the cake, and Mrs Shayler had volunteered to oversee the refreshments. Schools had been unable to release students to work with Plaxy for the dancing, but there was some possibility of co-operation with the Brownies. David Smith noted that there was an online event by Co-ops and Mutuals Wales on the same day between 10 and 12.

**Statement on IT Contract:** Norman outlined that the current contract would be ending in the summer and there would be a re-tendering process for a three-year contract. Andy Newham was winding up his company (which currently has the contract) but would carry on with the contractual duties. He was currently intending to tender to continue the contract on an individual basis.

**Date of Next AGM:** March 20<sup>th</sup> 2026

**Date of next COM meeting:** in the new couple of weeks