



THE AUSTIN SEVEN CLUBS' ASSOCIATION

Past Presidents: Donald Doughty, Stanley Edge,
Bert Hadley, Freddie Henry, Bob Wyatt



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Committee Meeting

held on Zoom

Tuesday 11th July 2023

Present

David Cochrane
Nick Salmon
Paul Lawrence
Chris Roberts
Howard Wright
Peter Hales
Roger Brown
Gordon England
Peter Lawson
Derek Sheldon
Roger Price
Stewart Robinson
Paul Maulden
Michael Tabcart
Chris Blower
Sarah Mason
Roly Alcock
David Charles
Rick Bishop
Chris Roberts
Mike Luff
Heather Maitland
Nick Lettington

Chairman / Pram Hood Register
Vice Chairman
Secretary / Cambridge A7&VCC
Treasurer / Bristol A7 Club
Editor / South Wales A7 Club
Registrar
Webmaster
Archivist
Essex Austin 7 Club
Rosengart Register
Online Austin 7 Club
Pre-War Austin 7 Club
Norfolk Austin 7 Club
Devon Austin 7 Club
Bongtree Club / Van Register
Cornwall Austin 7 Club
Hereford Austin 7 Club
Special Register / Cornwall Austin 7 Club
Midlands Austin 7 Club
Bristol Austin 7 Club
Vintage Austin Register
Archive Team
Speedex Register

1. Apologies for Absence

Ruairidh Dunford
Howard Annett
John King
Andy Lowe
Jim Blacklock
Robin Taylor
Nigel Barfoot
Chris Charles
Phil Baildon

Advertising Co-ordinator / Scottish A7C / GE
Austin 7 Owners Club / Magazine Distribution
Dorset Austin 7 Club
Midlands Austin 7 Club
Arrow Register
Big 7 Register
Austin Ex Apprentice Association
IT Consultant
Historian

2. Introductions

A roll call was conducted, and attendees identified.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of the last Meeting were AGM Minutes which have been circulated and will be formally agreed at the next AGM

4. Matters Arising

1. The A7CA Zoom Account is now in place. The mechanics of how it works will not make it possible for other clubs to use it but it will prevent committee meetings from having to be hosted on members private Zoom accounts.

5. Officer's Reports

Vice Chairman – David Cochrane

The National Austin 7 rally at Beaulieu seemed to be better than ever – quite a feat considering that this was its 60th anniversary. There was a record number of Big 7s – I think 15 or 16 attended! Nick Salmon, our Vice-Chairman, took a good number of photos as usual – these can be seen here:

- Diamond Anniversary: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAL9AH>

- People & Friends: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjALdnE>

- Driving Tests: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjALe3m>

- The Rally Field: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjALdjt>

- Winners: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAL9QS>

So many smiling faces – congratulations to Ian Nelson and his team.

People are still talking about the Centenary event – I think that it has encouraged people to come to rallies, resulting in good turnouts at the Austin rally at Stonehurst as well as at Beaulieu. Emma Airey from RH spent the day at the rally and was happy to talk to people and answer any questions. I think we are extremely fortunate to have an insurance company with such a personal touch – my recent experience of claiming after the incident in Holland in May was very smooth and satisfactory.

As you all probably know we have won another award! Our Centenary event was 'Event of the Year' in the National Car Club Awards at the NEC in March. Sponsored by Lancaster Insurance and supported by Practical Classics and Classic Car Weekly, and endorsed by the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, this is the fourth major award recognising the scale of the achievement last July. Hugh Barnes, Archivist Emeritus, accepted the award on behalf of the A7CA.

During the Association meeting in January, we wandered off topic during an AOB item and the role & aims of the Association came under discussion. This seemed to indicate that some of our members have a rather hazy idea of what the Association is all about. This prompted me to have another look at our website and constitution, both of which are indeed quite clear about the aims of the Association and also the rôle of the individual member Clubs. I don't propose to cover this during our meeting(s), as I feel that the answers lie on our website Home page (www.a7ca.org) and in our constitution

(<https://a7ca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/A7CA-Constitution-2017.pdf>). Please have a look at them and let me know if you have any questions or comments.

I have added a couple of items in AOB:

- a major concern has been raised by the Dutch A7 owners club. The cost of sending our magazines to them is getting prohibitive and has a major impact on their annual budget. However, we get a substantial part of our income from the magazines. A solution could be to send them a pdf version and not print magazines for them, but we have discussed the idea of producing the magazine in pdf format recently and various objections were raised, mainly to do with (potential loss of) income. I would like to suggest a partial solution: we produce a pdf version but only send this to overseas clubs, yet still charge them the levy for having the magazine. We know how many magazines they take now, so that amount would stay the same. Financially it would benefit the overseas clubs because they wouldn't have to pay carriage, it would benefit us because we would still get the money but wouldn't have to print their magazines, and it would be good for Howard because he wouldn't have to parcel up and send boxes of magazines abroad.

- Stanley Edge's memorial stone/area: this has become neglected again after the Association took the lead in clearing it a couple of years ago. John Stubbs of the Austin Motor Company tried to raise some money to create a picnic area but I don't think he got very far with it. He contacted us over a year ago to try to enlist our help - I pointed out that we were otherwise occupied (!) but would look at it again when the dust had settled from the Centenary. Have a look at his JustGiving page: www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stanley-edge-memorial

The memorial tablet is on National Trust land (<https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/HBSMR/MonRecord.aspx?uid=MNA155631>) so we perhaps we should contact the Ranger about this.

Comments:

None

Secretary – Paul Lawrence

A7CA Zoom Account has now been purchased for use at Committee Meetings so we no longer have to rely on committee members to make their personal Zoom Accounts available.

We have renewed our yearly membership to the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs as well as our registration with the Information Commissioner's Office

Publicity Officer advert gone out to clubs so please do what you can to help find a willing volunteer for this interesting and vital role.

Following the passing of the Archive Ten Year Plan at the AGM in May, a few of the relevant officers have been working through the detail of how the finances, agreed at the AGM, will be managed on a daily basis. This will enable us to retain flexibility and respond nimbly when artefacts become available, whilst ensuring that the management of the finances remains within the parameters of what has been agreed by the AGM over the ten-year lifetime of the plan. This will be outlined in an addendum to the Plan which will enable everyone to see and understand how it will be managed.

Chris Blower, who represents the Van Register and the Bongtree Club on the Association Committee has asked me to mention the club and highlight some good work they have undertaken over the last few years.

The Bongtree Club, despite being by far the most oddly named of our 'Full Member Clubs' and certainly our smallest, are alive and kicking. Classic and Vintage cars of many varieties

can be found in the car park at their monthly pub meeting, which includes anything from cyclecars to motorbikes and Austins. A write-up of the club can be found in Centenary Programme.

For the last 4 years they have run a classic car event to raise funds for pancreatic cancer as one of their members tragically died from it when he was in his early fifties. They have raised between £500 to £600 each year for the cancer fund by getting as many people as possible to attend and donate £5.

Their last charity event was on Saturday 24th June and at The Compasses Inn at Littley Green, which Chris describes as “is in the middle of nowhere, about 5 miles south of Braintree North Essex.

Well done to the Bongtree Club and thank you Chris for sharing your news with us.

Comments

David Cochrane commented on how good it was to see the Bongtree Club active and made the point they were actually one of the founding clubs of the Association.

Treasurer – Chris Roberts

The Accounts can be seen at Appendix 1

Comments

After over a year the VAT exemption request (asked for in May '22 after concerns with the impact of the Centenary Event) has finally caused some action on the part of HMRC who have asked for further information by 25th July including income over a 37 month period back to Nov '19. Mark Rose (accountant) has offered to assist and may require some payment for his time at some point but so far has not required anything.

The advice previously received that we would not need to register for VAT still stands but the exemption has yet to be granted. I expect there will be HMRC questions to be answered that I will need assistance with but at time of writing the questions appear straightforward.

Invoices have now been raised for the 2022 RH Insurance advertising placed in the various club's magazines, this should add near £2k to the Association funds. I have asked the relevant member clubs if they are happy to proceed with the current arrangements with RH Insurance for the coming year.

Archive funding is still to be finalised in regard to how it is to be operated (£20k fully flexible over the 10 years to £2k pa inflexible and all points in-between). Then Archive spend year to date is approaching £4000 (2 year's worth) with £1500 of that coming during Q223. When does the new archive funding regime apply from?

The Association now has a Direct Debit from it's main account to pay the annual GDPR fee (£35 pa) this is the only automatic payment from the accounts.

The association PayPal account has a small balance built from an overseas Subscription payment and an Archive sale. I have kept the balance with PayPal to facilitate any future PayPal spend (most likely to be from Archive but not exclusively)

Association balances as of 30/6/23: £25,304.42 (Lloyds main), £4,999.33(Lloyds Centenary), 14.49 (PayPal).

Comments

A long discussion took place where it became clear there was some confusion over the arrangements for the £20,000 earmarked for the Archive. Was this to be taken as a lump sum from existing funds or have £2000 drawn down each year for the next 10 years?

Advertising Manager – Ruairidh Dunford

The only thing I would report would be that I am continuing to cover the role, temporarily, until Sarah Mason feels well enough to take it on.

Comments

None

Archivist – Gordon England

Firstly, a big thanks to Hugh Barnes for his work in the Archive over the past few years. While Covid and the Centenary event preparation did impact work in the Archive, Hugh has set up a number of tasks which will move the Archive onto another level of availability of information. These efforts will be continuing with me as the officer but supported by Hugh and Heather Maitland, which definitely makes for steady progress.

The Archive continues with current focus on cataloguing and locating items as preparation for adding to the information available through the Archive website. As the Ten-Year Plan indicated, cataloguing and conserving will be the major work for some time to come.

There has been limited progress on making storage boxes for the major items in the collection. This is due to some very poor delivery performance from one of our suppliers. As soon as the card is available, we will be making boxes in addition to the catalogue tasks. Once we have a sure and reliable process for making boxes I will be asking for help in that area from outside our current team.

The major acquisition in the recent past is a collection of over 350 period photos of the Austin Seven. These came from the late Tim Harding via his brother Andrew who is the executor of Tim's estate. While we had to pay for the photos, they were obtained at a very reasonable price of £1000. Otherwise, acquisitions are not at the top of the activity list at the moment. We are keeping our eyes and ears open, however.

We have been given two glass fronted cabinets thanks to Kurt and Craig Sauter and Rachel Dunford. These are now at Lubbenham and one now holds the book collection in the Archive. Getting the books into closed cabinets was a recommendation from the course at the Hampshire Archives we are pleased to have achieved that.

Part of the catalogue process is to add physical locations for the items, and this is proceeding quite well. The storage is divided into bays and shelves. Labels have been added to the shelves and to items – well their boxes or storage mediums anyway – dealing with locations. Catalogue numbers are also being added to the storage mediums where possible. We are also adding ID numbers to the actual items – in pencil – again following the advice of the Hampshire Archives. We will be acquiring more archive boxes and wallets for storing photographs, which is the current area of catalogue efforts.

While it has been negotiated for this year, the question of insurance valuation will need to be addressed before next year's renewal comes around.

We are working on an acquisitions and disposals policy to help guide and prioritize the items we wish to add to the Archives. This should help us to increase the information available in the Archive but also make a sensible plan for disposal of duplicate or irrelevant items.

We are continuing with visitor days – 2nd Thursday by prior invitation please – and hope to hold another open Day later in the year. More on this as we confirm plans.

Comments:

The Archive team will write a financial addendum for the Archive plan to identify what they wanted and need from a finance timing perspective for the 10-year plan. This will include some direct discussions with Chris Roberts (Treasurer) which will be published for wider review.

Editor – Howard Wright

Just two items to report on:

1. At the last meeting (the AGM) there was an action for me to progress an 'Editorial Committee'. Unfortunately, I have not had time to do this and the item will have to be carried over.
2. I have, with the former Archivist and former Editor, discussed the need for an index for the magazine. Indexes do exist for the early years but these, nor the magazines themselves, are in electronic format. I hope to create a 'pro-forma' spreadsheet/database that will allow manual entry of indexable items from previous magazines. Such a spreadsheet should then allow electronic return of specific terms in the database. If anyone can assist in setting up this spreadsheet/database I would be grateful (my experience of spreadsheet construction is now over twenty years old). The sifting through of fifty years worth of magazine content and inputting it into the spreadsheet is no small task and I hope the member clubs can assist?

Comments:

Howard Wright - The Editorial Proposal will follow shortly

Registrar – Peter Hales

Between April, May and June we have had 12 new cars added to the register and 4 significant updates.

Comments:

None

Webmaster – Roger Brown

At the last committee meeting I agreed to confirm the accuracy of club information currently shown on our website. I'm working on it and in due course intend following up every club email address on the Association website to check. Details include contact details, email addresses (used for this email), website links and meeting details. They are shown in two places, the list of clubs and the interactive map. If you take the 'MEMBER CLUBS' tab near

the top of our website, it leads you to club details and the interactive map showing approximate location of club meetings.

I'd be grateful if you would check all your club's details and let me know any changes needed. Some clubs keep me up to, but I've not heard from the majority for a long time.

There is also another matter I'd like to mention - security of personal information. The Committee Officers recently decided, in view of experiences, that it would be prudent to remove our home addresses from the Association website. Most of us would say that we are rarely, if ever, contacted by post nowadays so this is a simple precaution to make identity theft a little harder without. We recommend Club Officials to consider following suit. I would also say that in compiling the list of email addresses for this round robin, I note that some clubs use individuals' own private email addresses. It is a little more secure to use an anonymous address such as secretary@ or club@ - as some clubs have done for a long time, but the cost of maintaining a domain name has to be considered as well.

Finally – what has the Association ever done for us? Apart from...

Well, here are a couple of suggestions on which feedback would be appreciated:

First, as Webmaster I occasionally get request for help disposing of cars and parts, and generally direct enquirers to local clubs and club magazines. The website has (in theory) wider reach than any A7 magazine, so we are considering if it is feasible and convenient to add a sales and wants page to the A7CA website.

Second, to help clubs get away from using personal email addresses, the Association mail server may be able to offer clubs email addresses such as club@a7ca.org either as an address which forwards email to an existing address (personal or otherwise) or maybe as a post box. This could be an alternative to a club incurring the ongoing expense of maintaining its own domain name for example www.club.org.uk

We are still considering the feasibility of setting this up, but please let us know if these services would be useful before we spend too much time on it.

Comments:

A conversation took place during which it was decided that most clubs already had a website with associated anonymised email address. It would also cause some confusion if some clubs had a7ca in their email address. For these reasons it was felt that it was not necessary for the Association Server to host club email addresses, and this is not an option that should be offered to clubs.

It was decided that there were already several recognized channels for Austin 7 Sales and Wants and adding another to the Association Website would be developing another unnecessary one which would likely to be poorly used in any case. It was therefore decided not to pursue this option.

Insurance Liaison officer – David Mawby

Nothing to Report

6. Contingency Reserve for Archive

At the AGM in May Sarah Mason suggested of a Contingency Reserve for the Archive and was asked to provide some more detail of her thoughts for this meeting. Sarah kindly provided the below information to further explain the concept.:

PROPOSAL TO ALLOCATE FUNDING FROM THE CENTENARY RALLY TO A FUND IN SUPPORT OF THE ARCHIVE.

It has been reported that there may be an unexpected surplus after the event in Moreton in Marsh last year. I believe that any surplus funds should be reinvested back in the Clubs' Association for future benefit, leaving a legacy from the centenary for the future. We also need to be able to show the wider Austin 7 community what was achieved with the funds.

At the AGM held in May, it was agreed to allocate a long term operating budget to the team. My suggestion is that some of the Moreton surplus should be reserved for the use of the Archive Team to secure important material. The operating budget will cope with the day to day running of the archive but we need to allocate some funds towards the unexpected which would otherwise be lost. I am suggested that we ring fence £7500 -£10,000 in the Association accounts for the archive, so that Gordon, Hugh and the team know that there is funding to support their work creating the archive for the future.

We have a fantastic opportunity to use the surplus for something meaningful – archive, bursaries for apprentices etc, where we can show the current membership what the surplus will count for. I don't believe it should disappear into Association funds but instead should be held for significant projects; the support of an earmarked reserve for the archive is a good way to start.

Comments

A conversation took place in which no firm conclusions were reached in relation to how to proceed with this item.

7. AOB

- Removal of events from online calendar Roger Brown / Howard Wright

A conversation took place where it was decided to remove events from the on-line calendar once the event had passed.

- Distribution of Magazine to Overseas Clubs David Cochrane

A conversation took place about the possibility of providing the Dutch Austin 7 Club with PDF copies of the Association Magazine. The details of this proposal can be seen in the Chairmans Report (top of these Minutes). The points were made that there are dangers in pursuing this course of action if safeguards were not in place to prevent the magazine becoming freely available to others without them having to pay for it, leading to a loss of income for the A7CA. (The magazine is the main income generator for the A7CA).

It was agreed to trial the proposal with the Dutch Austin 7 Club with conditions that include **NOT MAKING IT AVAILABLE ON THEIR WEBSITE**, emailing it directly to their **MEMBERS ONLY** with a strict condition that it is **NOT TO BE FORWARDED** to anyone else.

- Stanley Edge Memorial Stone David Cochrane

The memorial stone for Stanley Edge is behind a temporary fence in a layby at Frankley Beeches and is in a terrible state of disrepair. It has been vandalised and surrounded by fly-tipping.

David Cochrane had been contacted before the Centenary by John from the Austin Motor Company to see if steps could be taken to rectify the situation.

A conversation took place which concluded that it would be almost impossible to find a permanent solution to the problem, short of posting a 24-hour guard there. We therefore concluded that perhaps we should investigate finding another location for the memorial stone, in consultation with the National Trust of course. David Cochrane will write to John to update him.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 7pm

Appendix 1

Accounts Q2 23

Quarter		Q223																		
Sum of Money	Recipient	Purpose																Grand Total		
	Admin	Admin Total	subs	subs Total	Arch			Arch Total	Mag	Mag Total	Cent	Cent Total	binder	binder Total			Grand Total			
Payee	IT	subs	subs	fees	resto	stock	IT	Sale	layout	P&P	print	(blank)	stock			Grand Total				
PayPal								10	10							10				
Ireland			5	5												5				
A7CA				-0.51	-0.51											-0.51				
Centenary									-360							-349.05				
Lloyds	-203.87	-30	-233.87			-257.69	-1000	-191.76								-6056.75				
Grand Total	-203.87	-30	-233.87	5	-0.51	4.49	-257.69	-1000	-191.76	10	-1439.45	-360	-709.91	-2662	-3731.91	10.95	10.95	-1001.52	-1001.52	-6391.31

