

Milford PROBUS Club

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

on Friday 23rd May 2025 at Godalming Freemason's Hall

1. Attendees

There were 21 attendees including 6 committee members.

2. Apologies:

Mark Alcock, Ned & Sue Dailly, Marie Barnwell, Martin Lee, Robin Bellwood, Malcolm McMullan, Chris Jones, Steve Stanley, Doug Smit, Colin Simmons, Liz Simmons, Neville Carrington, Stuart Miskimmin.

3. President's Address.

First of all, I would like to inform you that I will be continuing as President for another year as no one else has come forward! I hope that you all have been satisfied with your first Lady President as you will be getting another year of me. Getting people prepared to serve on the committee is a problem for most Probus clubs these days including our friends in Godalming Probus so your club needs you if you can help. We always welcome any member who feels that they would be prepared to join the Committee even without a specific role in order to see what we do and maybe take on a role.

I would also like to thank you all for supporting us during the last year. Inflation has caused rising costs for the lunches and there has been a change of caterers partly to try and keep costs down. We have also lost a few old members as usual but I am glad to say that recruitment has been reasonably successful and we achieved a net gain to 43 members.

Please note, for those who have not already done so, that subs were due on 1st April.

We have had 10 normal lunches with generally a good standard of speaker. Plus, we had a Summer Outing to Greyfriars Vineyard which was most enjoyable, according to those who attended. My thanks to Peter Parker for organising this. Godalming Probus organised our joint Spring outing in June to Nymans and Sissinghurst and in the Autumn we organised a visit to Brighton Pavilion which was not as well attended as we hoped. With interest in special lunches at the Frensham Pond Hotel dropping off and so a need to consider alternatives we decided to hold our Christmas Lunch in the Masonic Hall for the first time. Most members seemed happy with the move and enjoyed themselves. The lunch included some entertainment by a magician. Chris will review the financial costs in his report.

We need to give a big thank you to Jon Warnke who is stepping down as Lunch and Membership Secretary after several years. Peter Parker will be taking on the role of Lunch Secretary and I will be taking on the role of Membership Secretary which includes being the first point of contact for the Club. We have been joined by Colin Simmons who has taken on the role of Social Secretary and Steve Stanley has said that he will carry on as Speaker Secretary for another year although other commitments may make it difficult for him to nursemaid the speaker at every lunch. Neil Bamford continues to be doing a very good job in publicising the Club, both in Round-and-About and Vantage-Point as well as various other publications, and this has resulted in a certain amount of interest and new members.

As part of a recruitment effort some clubs make a big effort to get existing members to bring a guest with a view to them joining. We have not pushed this hard so far.

As well as gaining some new members we have also lost several old members who have died. These include Turlough Bamber, Michael Woolrych, Guy Gammell, Robert Bailey, Andrew Hind and, recently, Tony Barron and Maurice McCracken.

4. Treasurer's Report on the Accounts for 2024 -2025

1. The Income and Expenditure Account for 2024-25 and Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025 has been distributed. Subscriptions were received from 43 members, amounting to £1,075. There were ten standard lunches, from which there was a deficit of £76. The catering cost per person increased from £26 to £28 in October and the charge to members and guests went up from £30 to £32 in January. We need about 30 members and guests for a lunch to break even.
2. The visit to Greyfriars Vineyard broke even and there was a surplus of £66 on the Christmas lunch. The joint outing with Godalming Probus to Brighton incurred a deficit of £284. Speakers' fees amounted to £715.
3. Other expenditure comprised a donation to Skillway (£300), and website and equipment costs (£35). There was a deficit on the year of £252 and the year-end balance was £2,421.
4. The accounts have been independently examined.
5. Subscriptions for 2025-26, at £25, are now due and should be paid preferably by bank transfer to the Milford Probus Club account, sort code 60-09-04, account number 72924047. Thank you to the members who have already paid.

5. Discussion on Membership Fee

There is a proposal that we increase the membership subscription to £30 from next year. Chris was neutral on the proposal but gave some details:

The subscription has been at £25 for many years now. It pays for the speaker fees and the annual charitable donation. Generally, we have made a small surplus each year and the money in the account has been building up. Even with this last year's deficit, we still have too much so there is no financial pressure to raise the subscription.

Neil Bamford and Nicholas O'Brien spoke in favour on the grounds that our subscription is at the bottom end of typical levels and well out of line. Prices are going up all round including speaker fees although typically speakers ask for a donation to charity which has recently been set as £100. Those asking for travelling expenses usually ask for rather less. Some just come for the free lunch. The subscription has been held at £25 for this year but it seems that the time is right to increase it to £30 from next year.

Vote was taken and all were in favour of the increase with no objections.

6. Membership & Luncheon Secretary's Report

- Membership for 2024-25 was 44. We have had 3 or 4 new members, but this has been offset by the usual resignations due to ill-health, moving away from Godalming, and sadly, death. These overall numbers do reflect an increase over the Covid period 2020-22 but are substantially down on levels 10 years ago which were in the high 50s and low 60s.
- Thanks to Neil Bamford's efforts in achieving good publicity for the club and for lunches in monthly publications such as Vantage Point, and Round-and-About, we continue to attract new members through this route.
- Our lunches have in general been well attended with average numbers around the 30 level, peaking at 38 but dipping for events like the AGM to the low twenties, often reflecting members on holiday! Jon remains positive about the way things are going.

- We are in the hands of the Masons when it comes to the choice of caterer and there have been 2 or 3 changes over the course of the year and some price increases. We are paying £32 currently which Jon feels is good value compared for instance with an Arts Society lunch at Bramley Golf Club who charged £36 for 2 courses and a rather drab menu. Godalming are currently going for only two courses, but this has problems with whether you skip the starter or skip the pudding (one month they do main and pudding and the next month start and main). We are sticking to 3 courses and nobody has strongly demurred.
- We held the Christmas Lunch at the Masonic Hall which was generally well received. Subsequent to this lunch we have switched to round tables which seems to have helped conversations as it is easier to talk across a round table.
- The service and the food is felt to be good and the menu choices have been increasing. We now have a Spring/Summer menu and a slightly different Autumn/Winter menu. The menu is chosen by the committee member who hosted the previous committee meeting.

Jon is resigning from his role as Membership and Lunch Secretary after many years' service. The role is being split in two with Peter Parker taking over as Lunch Secretary and Miranda is going to look after Membership.

The meeting thanked Jon for all that he had done for the club over the years.

Peter Parker said that he might be looking at alternative ways of handling the booking for lunches. Godalming Probus use a web site called Ticket Tailor as a booking and payment processor which might be worth following up. It is not known how this is working out for Godalming. It is also not known if all Milford Members are comfortable with booking through a web-site.

7. Motions

Participants' votes were taken at the meeting on the following five motions. The Committee proposed:

1. The minutes (circulated to all members) of last year's AGM be accepted.
2. The Treasurer's report and accounts for 2024/2025 (circulated to all members) be accepted.
3. The annual membership subscription remains at £25 (It was agreed earlier to increase this to £30 for 2026/2027)
4. Milford Probus Club make a charitable donation of £300 to the President's chosen charity: Shooting Star Children's Hospice Guildford
5. That the Committee for the Milford Probus Club for 2025 - 2026 should be as follows:

President	Miranda O'Brien
Treasurer	Christopher Rogers
Committee Secretary	Nicholas O'Brien
Lunch Secretary	Peter Parker
Membership Secretary	Miranda O'Brien
Speaker Secretary	Stephen Stanley
Social Secretary	Colin Simmons
Media & PR	Neil Bamford
Website Manager	Nicholas O'Brien

All have agreed to serve in the above capacities and are nominated by the existing Committee.

All motions were voted for by the meeting with no dissenting voices.

8. Members' Issues

Members were invited to comment on the following issues. Members had been sent these issues and invited to send their views and comments by email before the AGM. No other issues had been proposed by members for discussion.

a) **Joint Spring Outing, organised by Godalming Probus, to Mottisfont on Thursday 22nd May.**

6 members, and 3 guests, of Milford Probus went on this outing and thought that the coach was good and the visit to Mottisfont was excellent. All went well and the Rose Garden and Rose Collection were looking beautiful. Godalming had had to involve some other groups in order to help fill the coach including the Milford U3A gardening club, the Milford Horticultural Society and Widows of Godalming members.

b) **Visit to Loseley House on Thursday 10th July.**

This is being organised by Colin Simmons as the new Social Secretary. It is solely for Milford Probus members and guests but we could do with a few more as we are now 10. The reason for this choice is some members like Nick and Miranda had been to Loseley many years ago when first arriving in the village but have not been since as it is almost too close. It was pointed out that Loseley had expanded a lot in recent years and a visit is supporting a local business.

Currently it is being suggested that we have a House Tour at 11.00 and a Garden Tour at 2.00 or perhaps both in the afternoon leading up to a tea, although the programme is not yet fixed. Meg Alnutt, who does some guiding at Loseley, pointed out that it is usually difficult to fit in both a house tour and a garden tour in just a single Morning or Afternoon session.

Miranda will report back to Colin.

c) **Joint Autumn Outing organised by Milford Probus, possibly to Winchester.**

This is also to be organised by Colin Simmons. Winchester has been suggested because of the connection with the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen who died in Winchester. A date in very early October looks likely.

Probus had a visit to Winchester about 10 years ago featuring a visit to the Ghurkha Museum just outside the city. The thinking is this current visit might centre around a guided tour of the Cathedral particularly as this is the only way to see the Chain Library. There is a lot to see or do in town including the riverside walk.

d) **Christmas Lunch Friday 12th December to be held at the Masonic Hall.**

Everybody at the meeting seemed happy with revisiting the Masonic Hall.

9. Other Responsibilities

The following members have special responsibilities without being members of the Committee. They deserve our warm thanks.

Stewart Miskimmin - Independent Examiner

Chris asked the meeting to reappoint Stewart for another year. He is happy to continue and it was agreed.

Martin Farr – Walks Organiser

An enthusiastic group enjoys regular walks in delightful countryside ending with a fine pub lunch. There is a healthy interest in both the A (up to about 7 miles) and B walks (up to about 5 miles). Martin normally offers a choice of dates for each and will pick the most popular. It now looks like the numbers of some of the B Walks could be getting up to 8 or 9 which could be a bit of a problem as more and more places are asking for a deposit for numbers of 8 or over but we need to be able to cancel or move the date if the weather is inclement.

The meeting finished at 2.50pm.



Milford Probus
President Address 2



Milford Probus -
Treasurer's report.d



Milford Probus -
final accounts.xlsx