

Minutes of the 1261st meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club held at the Moorside Social Club on 16th February, 2022

As reported at the last meeting in November 2021, numbers are seriously reduced due to older members falling off the perch and few new members joining; this is a familiar peaks and troughs situation which will, hopefully, be remedied in the coming months. It meant that the members attending the 1261st meeting were all in place well before the normal starting time of 8.00 p.m. A copy of the rules was produced under rule 8 and a discussion took place as to whether the meeting could start early because all members were in place but it was decided that the existing rule 5 stating that all meetings should start at 8.00 p.m. would apply.

Pickwick opened the meeting dead on time but instead of the first item being the toast to Mr Pickwick, members toasted the memory of Jack Hopkins whose funeral all had attended on the date when the January meeting should have taken place.

Despite the opening paragraph of this meeting, it was noticed that there was a guest present; he was introduced by his host, Tom Roker, who indicated that Bruce was hoping to join the club and asked about procedures. Grummer explained that it was up to Roker to suggest a name for the new member. In the past such recommendations would have been considered by an executive committee but with numbers so low any ordinary meeting could approve the appointment. Roker said he would consider the list of available options and suggest a name at the next meeting.

Grummer told members that when he joined (many years ago) he was told by his sponsor (Dodson) what his name would be and carefully studied it so that he would be fully informed at his inauguration only to find a completely different name announced when the event actually took place. Whether Dodson had a smirk on his face was not recorded.

When Rule 8 was again invoked because of the speed at which the meeting was progressing, Grummer told members about a trip he and Smangle had made to the London Pickwick Club at the George and Vulture Pub. It would be unnecessary to suggest that drink had been taken prior to the meeting but they were made very welcome and club ties were exchanged (in fact, I think the tie Grummer wears to meetings is a Pickwick Cycle Club tie). In those days our club always had a substantial meal at each meeting and Grummer and Smangle were surprised to be given two small lamb chops with a spoonful of mashed potato and some vegetables. Even greater surprise resulted from the announcement that those present had to pay £57 each for this meagre fare!

Whilst on the subject of food, Jingle said he and Grummer had tried to find suitable dates for the Christmas outing without success and the November meeting had decided that the outing should be postponed until January. Further problems occurred with that date, not least because of Jack Hopkins funeral so it was suggested that a further delay until April might be necessary. Members agreed to leave it to Jingle and Pickwick to suggest a suitable date.

After the reading and inquisition from Chapter 4 had resulted in everybody being fined, Roker announced that he had forgotten to bring a bottle for the raffle so a further fine made its way into the Fines Box. Unfortunately, Murphy's Law followed and the winner of the first prize was Roker. At this point it is necessary to add that Mivins went to put something in his car boot several days after the event and found Rev Stiggins' raffle prize in the car boot having probably fallen from Stiggins' walking frame. It has since been reunited with Stiggins.

The vote of thanks to Pickwick and the vice-chairman was proposed by Roker who said that the meeting had been excellent and that Pickwick had done well although he later amended this, following expressions of incredulity from the members and said that at least the food was good. He acknowledged that the vice- chairman had banged the gavel at the appropriate time which was all that could be said for him. Seconding the vote of thanks, Stiggins said he found it difficult to follow Roker because the meeting had been absolute rubbish and the fact that it had been a really good meeting was due to the members not the chairman or vice-chairman.

Good neet owd friends was sung as badly as usual and was followed by an equally unmusical rendition of the National anthem. Fortunately, the reduced numbers meant it was not as noisy as usual.

The Raffle raised £3.50 whilst the fines box contained £6.00 after Mivins substituted a 10p piece for the Dirham contained within.