

**Minutes of the 1196th Meeting of the
Manchester Pickwick Club
held at the Moorside Social Club on 17th September, 2009**

The 1196th meeting of the Manchester Pickwick Club commenced at 8.04 p.m. with Dodson circulating the table collecting money as usual.

The toast to Mr Pickwick was sung and it was suggested that the quantity of the singing was good although the quality left a little to be desired.

Tadger volunteered to act as POC and immediately cadged a sheet of paper on which to record the drinks order, unlike his predecessor, Ben Allen who not only cadged paper but also a pen to write with! The order having been taken, Tupman apologised for Weller who was in Spain; he reported that when Dodson was in hospital for a hernia operation recently, Weller had mistakenly assumed it was to have his wallet lanced when, in fact, everybody knew Dodson was having his wallet pocket stitched up and a padlock fitted!

With the placing of the drinks order Smangle produced a sort of loyalty card which was issued to regulars at the Moorside club and allowed a reduction in drinks prices – Dodson immediately claimed that this sort of card should belong to the Pickwick club rather than the individual because it was club money which had purchased the drinks in the first place so any benefit should accrue to the club.

At this point in the proceedings Winkle's mobile phone rang so he incurred the first fine of the evening, closely followed by Dodson who Pickwick accused of trying to take over the meeting.

During a lull in the proceedings Tupman was invited to entertain members and told the tale of spending the bank holiday in Blackpool where he had the audacity of going on a ride called 'The Big One' which frightened the life out of him and the trip was further ruined when a BMW ran into the back of his car on the return journey.

The Secretary reported he had received a letter from Peter Barnes calling a meeting on either 29th October or 3rd November; Pickwick and Smangle agreed to attend on behalf of this club and Dodson later agreed also to attend. A further copy of a letter from Cyril Baldwin (Pickwick of Rochester Pickwick Club) had been received suggesting a meeting in Rochester in costume! Members agreed that the Rochester club be contacted to let them know of our presence but that costumes are out. A further communication from the City Pickwick Club inviting members to an anniversary celebration at the Mansion House on 13th July had been received but the Secretary had replied that no one from the Manchester club was able to attend.

A further communication of direct concern to this club was a letter from the Secretary of the Moorside club indicating that on Thursday evenings the upstairs lounge would no longer be available for meetings of this club. After considerable discussion involving inspection of the alternative room suggested by the Moorside club, members agreed that the alternative room suggested for Thursday evenings wasn't suitable and Grummer was asked to speak to the steward to see if the upstairs lounge was available on Wednesdays. Grummer was told that Wednesdays were fine and

members agreed that a formal letter should be sent by the Secretary to his counterpart at the Moorside club asking that the upstairs lounge be made available to this club on the third Wednesday evening in each appropriate month.

Jingle asked that the Secretary write to Mrs Jingle notifying her of the change of meeting dates so she could make alternative arrangements for the soirees she normally hosts when Jingle is attending Pickwick meetings, otherwise he would be forced to roam the streets until all her guests had gone home!

Grummer said he had kept in touch with Mrs Pott during the summer and had also delivered a bottle of 'medicine' to Dodson following his operation; however, he admitted he had drunk most of the medicine himself.

The raffle followed its usual shambolic course with Pickwick winning the last prize; it was suggested that Dodson should think carefully in future about who gets the best prizes, bearing in mind that Pickwick levies the fines!

The vote of thanks was proposed by Grummer who said a vote of thanks was a bit of an embarrassment because the meeting had been absolutely abysmal from start to finish and Pickwick had shown no control whatsoever. The vice-chairman had done little to help the floundering chairman and the whole performance by both Chairman and his vice-chairman was as tarnished as the badge of office Pickwick wore round his neck.

Seconding the vote of thanks, Winkle said he didn't agree with Grummer but accepted that things could have been better had Pickwick been aware of what was going on. For example, Smangle had been fined for swearing and had merely passed the fine off with the remark that he was in front, but no check had been made to confirm that claim. Similarly, Tadger had volunteered to act as POC but had been forced to bring the drinks up by hand because the drinks tray wasn't available – the former POC who now occupied the vice-chairman's position should have foreseen this possibility and made sure the tray was available.

Pickwick thanked both members for their kind words and said this was the most difficult meeting he had chaired.

'Good neet owd friends' was sung by all and followed by the National Anthem.

The raffle raised £8.50 whilst the Fines Box contained £9.09.