

Independent inquiry into the conduct of meetings and decision-making processes of the Executive Committee/Board of the Richard III Society

The Board of Directors of the Richard III Society has now set up the independent inquiry promised in its last statement to members. Following the resignation of three valued Directors, two of whom were new to the Board, having been elected for the first time at the October 2019 AGM, the inquiry will examine the activities of the Executive Committee/Board in the recent past and its conduct of meetings and decision-making processes.

Philip Hume, Secretary of the Mortimer History Society, has been asked and has agreed to carry out the inquiry as Independent Assessor. Philip will be known to many members through his articles in the *Ricardian Bulletin*, the successful Mortimer History Society/Richard III Society conference last June, and the talks he has given to some of our Branches and Groups. As Secretary of a historical society he has relevant experience of running a body similar to our Society; he is also a member of the Richard III Society but has no ties to any of the Directors. In addition, during his career he has had responsibilities for supporting and advising community and voluntary organisations, has worked for a number of years in corporate policy and strategy in local authorities and was Assistant Director for Corporate Strategy and Governance at one of the largest local authorities in the country. In his own words, 'I have, therefore, considerable experience of leading and managing a medium-size service (that inevitably involved at times investigations into complaints and personnel issues); strategic thinking; organisational governance; and working with voluntary not-for-profit societies.'

As Independent Assessor, Philip has the authority to take statements from, and enter into discussions with, anyone he considers relevant to the inquiry who is willing to participate in it, and all of this will be completely confidential to Philip alone. (Please note that the Independent Assessor will decide who to approach and is not seeking unsolicited submissions of views.) We are pleased to say that Matthew Lewis, Amanda Geary and Philippa Langley have already agreed to participate in the inquiry. The Independent Assessor also has the power to see the agendas, minutes, reports and other documents, including e-mail and other communications, to and from the EC/Board.

The intended outcome of the inquiry will be a final report containing:

- A summary of the issues raised and criticisms made by respondents to the inquiry.
- The Independent Assessor's considered analysis of any deficiencies in the Board's procedures and activities.
- Recommendations where necessary for the establishment, or alteration, of rules and standard operating procedures in the conduct of the Board meetings and its decision-making processes within and outside Board meetings and its use of delegated authority.
- Anything else considered pertinent to the running of the Society.

It is hoped that this report will be available in approximately two months from now. The Board will publish a summary of the report; the full text, subject to maintaining the confidentiality of individual participants in the inquiry, will be available to any member of the Society who requests it. The Board will act on any criticisms and recommendations to ensure improvement, where necessary, of rules and standard operating procedures in the conduct of the Board meetings and its decision-making processes and communications, to achieve the standards of fairness and transparency owed to the membership, and consistent with company law.

As we enter a new stage in the existence of the Richard III Society, becoming a legally recognised body for the first time as a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Board welcomes this opportunity to review and strengthen the governance of the Society, while regretting the circumstances that have led to it.

The Board of the Richard III Society

11 May 2020