

## RFS President's Report AGM Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 2026

Welcome to you all, members and guests, to our 57<sup>th</sup> AGM of the Rowell Fair Society.

Available for your reference are Agendas and copies of the Treasurer's Report.

After the formal business of the AGM, we will be hearing from Frank on just what is involved in making sure it "all happens" -the work involved to ensure everything runs smoothly in the Role of the Bailiff.

Last year's Fair was the 821<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the first Royal Charter granted in 1204.

All went well and it was well supported, all aided by sunny weather and with a record-breaking number of entrants at the Vehicle Show. Roll on Summer!

The Society's role is to support the Fair and its traditions as well as preserving and promoting the Proclamation of our Ancient Charter. To this end we try to encourage attendance by organising events in addition to the Fair such as on the first Saturday when we have the Rowell Fair Tart competition in the morning at the Arts & Heritage Centre.

It's a fun competition and we would love to welcome more participants. Entrance forms including recipe will be available at the A & H Centre. The recipe is also available on our website.

Other events include the Gretton Silver Band playing in the Methodist Church after the Blessing of the Fair, the Model Fair Exhibition, the Parish Church Flower Show and Entertainment prior to the Fair opening on the Sunday. We are planning this year to also have entertainment on the last Saturday just before the Fair opens as an encouragement to attend the Fair on it's final day.

All this on your doorstep, why would anyone go elsewhere? Please join us in the ongoing popularity of our unique Tradition. We are also planning to sell merchandise based on the successful slogan "It's only Proc n Rowell but I like it". T- shirts and probably baseball caps will be available in limited numbers so grab them quickly as they sold out last year! We have also updated our metal badges - here on sale tonight at only £1 each.

Rowell Fair Week this year is Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> to Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> with Proclamation Monday being June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Allen Eaton's Steam Engine and living van will be with us again and will add to the Civic Parade on the Sunday as it proceeds from Glendon Road to the Parish Church for the 2pm Civic service and then back to the fairground for the 3pm Blessing of the Fair.

As previously mentioned, Street entertainment will be active in the Fairground prior to the Blessing. Our thanks go to Rothwell Town Council for granting us £1K towards enabling the weekend entertainment to happen. We endeavour to employ "local talent" and if anyone has a contact, please see Ian Dudley who co-ordinates our entertainments schedule

**The Model Exhibition** organised by Dave Arthur will be held as usual in the Tresham Hall.

The Classic Vehicle show will be supported by entertainment at The Charter.

As you know Monday sees our unique Ancient Charter Proclamation at 6am.

You may have attended many times or not for a while. Please come along and keep the custom supported. Encourage others to get up too! Attendance numbers at the Proclamation is one of the main measures of the success of what we do.

Our subscription membership numbers are not increasing so please encourage those you know to join the Society, still only £5 each.

You may also recall that we have had to review the number of members' evenings as low attendances were making them unviable to run. We agreed to run just the AGM and Showmen's Night. However, at last year's AGM we were asked to run a meeting in the autumn which we did. The subject was "Discovering the Rutland Roman Villa" with Jim Irvine and it was well attended.

We will continue the three a year but review each year as to its viability. As I have said before, it's a question of use it or lose it.

As stated last year, our website and social media exposure has allowed us to reach a wider audience, here's Steve to elaborate.

REPORT PRESENTATION BY STEVE PALMER HERE

Thanks, Steve, for doing a sterling job on keeping us in touch with the world.

We also keep in touch with the local community by contributing to the RTC newsletter that is delivered to every household. The one nearer the Fair will include the legally agreed diversions and road closures to keep the community informed as we are aware that those new to Rothwell may not be fully aware of Rowell Fair week.

It is with sadness that we lost two former committee members over the year - Mick Smith and Roger Wilson, both great supporters of the Fair. If you attended AGMs over the years, you may recall the hilarious cameo roles enacted by Mick & friends depicting our local boot and shoe industry.

We also lost Les Voss and Dave Springthorpe. Les served as a Halberdier for many years, not only at the fair but also at special events.

Dave Springthorpe will also be sadly missed. Dave was a great friend and enthusiastic supporter of our Model Exhibition, our fair and fairs in general. He also reported on fairs for the World Fair publication for many years, ensuring Rowell Fair was always represented.

As you know at the AGM, we award Honorary Life Memberships to those who have supported the Society and the Fair and its traditions over the years.

It is not so much the monetary value but the grateful recognition of support to the Society.

This year we are awarding three, they are: - Jo Garner, Luke Stevenson and David Arthur.

Jo, who as well as her professional advice and work on the management plans and other event demands, provides an invaluable link between the Rothwell Town Council and Rowell Fair Society.

Luke has been actively supporting the Proclamation for many years as a Halberdier.

David has been and still is, a stalwart in the organisation of the Model Fair Exhibition.

#### PRESENTATION

Last year I mentioned that we needed to boost our committee and add new skills. We have been fortunate to welcome Linda Saunders who has taken on the role of Treasurer in which she is very experienced, and I must say very enthusiastic.

Also joining is Cedwien Brown who brings a wealth of experience as a Rothwell Town Council member and a proud Rowellian.

Mark Hughes has had to leave the committee due to other commitments. While with us, Mark was in the early stages of nurturing links with the Town schools in our endeavours to involve them in our history. We hope to continue this connection in the coming year.

Tom Johnson has joined the committee during the year and will be taking on a specific role in due course. The Society thanks Richard Ley for his service who has retired from the Committee.

You may recall that we are intending to place explanatory slate heritage plaques at each Proclamation point. This has proved to be more complicated due to listed building and planning permission issues. It is hoped we shall complete before too long.

The refurbishment of the Bailiff's Staff of Office that Frank carries during the Proclamation has also been delayed but is being progressed.

A few thanks:

To Frank for all the background work he undertakes, including representing RFS on the Town's Events Committee

Thanks go to the Arts & Heritage Centre for ongoing support.

Thanks go to the Conservative Club - we are not there tonight due to the Club refurbishment. Thanks to Lennie & the team for hosting us tonight here at The Old Barns, much appreciated.

Also, warm thanks to all who help behind the scenes. All help, small or large, is gratefully welcomed.

Finally, thanks to Bill our Auditor and our hard-working Committee members for giving their time and effort to support our unique tradition.

Thank you for attending tonight and I look forward to seeing you at Showmen's Evening and as many events as possible over the whole of Fair Week.

By working together, the memories we create and the traditions we uphold will all ensure that our Charter Fair and our unique Proclamation will continue to thrive for many years to come.

Thank you.