

Dereham Heritage Trust

CIO number 1187140

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held by Zoom Conference on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 7.30 pm

Present 14 members

Attending Megan Dennis

Apologies Revd J Boston, Alan and Lynette Brinsdon, Marigold Merkel, Hilary Williams, Matthew Walker, Joan Cole

Welcome

- 1.1 The chairman, Trevor Ogden (TO), welcomed everyone to the DHT's first AGM as a charitable incorporated organisation. He asked members to contact Ken Hawkins or Sue Rockley if they wished to raise any points which occurred to them after the meeting.

Minutes of the 2020 AGM

- 2.1 The minutes had been circulated for information but did not need to be approved as they related to the body which had been replaced by the CIO.

Background to the meeting

- 3.1 The papers circulated to members had explained that the meeting was taking place on 31 March in order to take advantage of a dispensation from the Government under Covid 19 rules allowing AGMs to be held on line. The dispensation ended on 31 March. The members would be asked to consider an amendment to the DHT constitution to permit annual and special general meetings on line in future. There was already a provision for normal meetings to be held on line.

Chairman's report

- 4.1 The report had been circulated to members. Looking back at last year's report, TO noted that he had hoped that 2020 would be a less complex year than 2019. This had not proved to be the case. 2020 had been complicated, but not unsuccessful for DHT.

- 4.2 DHT in itself was quite a complex organisation with its responsibilities for the Museum, the archive, monthly members' meetings, outreach through newsletters etc. It also needed to have a good working relationship with Dereham Town Council, which was sometimes very time consuming. In addition, members were working on projects including the Wayfinding panels for Dereham and preparations for Dereham's pocket park which would celebrate the work of Ellenor Fenn, as well as on a major new exhibition for the 2021 season at the museum.

- 4.3 *The Museum* – Under Covid legislation the earliest possible opening date for the 2021 season would be 17 May. Ongoing repairs, both internal and external, and the refurbishment of the pargeting on the cottage, meant that it was unlikely that the museum would open before July. It was hoped, however, that it might be

	possible to have extra opening days during the school holidays, but this would depend on having sufficient volunteer resource.
4.4	DHT was working with the Paston Footprints project to stage a new exhibition covering John Fenn's role in publishing the famous Paston Letters. The display would also illustrate his wife Ellenor's role in literacy and education, and 18 th century Dereham. Sue Walker, Robena Brown and Lucy Care were leading on this project
4.5	<i>The Archive</i> – DHT had a serious and urgent issue around lack of storage space in the archive which the Committee was addressing.
4.6	<i>The Trust</i> – TO thanked the members of the Committee – Peter Wade-Martins, Robena Brown, Ken and Catherine Hawkins and Sue Rockley for everything that they did for the Trust.
4.7	It was proposed by Ken Hawkins, seconded by Jennie Lock and agreed unanimously that the report should be adopted.
4.8	It was noted that an annual report, including the accounts, would be submitted to the Charity Commission.
	<u>Accounts for the year to 31 December 2020</u>
5.1	The treasurer, Ken Hawkins (KH), had circulated the accounts together with detailed explanatory notes. As usual, the accounts had been split into three sections – Museum, Archive and Trust issues (membership, talks etc). For some elements it was clear where income and expenditure should be allocated, but for others the allocation was less precise.
5.2	It had not been possible to open the Museum in 2020 so there had been no income from admissions and donations.
5.3	Face to face meetings ended in March 2020, so there had been no income from members or visitors at the meetings. A small amount of income had been received from visitors attending the on-line meetings, and some members had responded to requests for voluntary donations for the meetings.
5.4	There would have been a deficit over the year of £278 based on DHT's normal activities after taking into account the effect of the Covid closures etc. However, DHT had received a £10k business interruption grant from the Government. The trustees were now considering how to use this money. The first payment from the grant would cover the deficit of £278.
5.5	Uncertainty remained around dates for the museum opening and the resumption of face to face meetings, and these delays would affect the 2021 finances.
5.6	The trustees hoped to use the remainder of the £10k grant to make a substantial investment for the future of the Trust, and members would be kept informed.
5.7	There were no queries on the accounts. TO thanked KH for all his work as treasurer.
5.8	TO noted that the £10k had been very welcome and something of a surprise. The trustees were considering how, once face to face meetings resumed, they might record presentations so that people who were unable/unwilling to attend meetings

	might enjoy the talks. This might require some investment in equipment. It was also becoming increasingly clear that the Trust would have to rent additional storage space for the archive.
5.9	TO hoped that DHT could extend its appeal and relevance to younger people living in Dereham. Dereham was a good place to live, and it was important for people to appreciate that and to consider how it might be improved. DHT had a contribution to make to this.
5.10	It was proposed by Sue Rockley, seconded by Jennie Lock and agreed unanimously that the accounts should be adopted.
	<u>Subscription rates</u>
6.1	KH explained that the trustees had the power to agree subscription rates but preferred to consult with the members. The trustees proposed that the rates should remain unchanged at £12 for a single member and £20 for joint members at the same address. There were no comments from members.
	<u>Museum mentor's report</u>
7.1	Megan Dennis spoke to her report which had been circulated with the papers. A copy is filed with these minutes.
7.2	TO thanked Megan for the support that she provided to the trustees.
7.3	TO noted that DHT belonged to the Association of Independent Museums and to SHARE East which was a government sponsored organisation of 200 museums in the east of England. Its membership was very diverse. Three members of the committee had recently attended a seminar on accreditation.
	<u>President's address</u>
8.1	TO noted that Revd Jonathan Boston was one of about nine members who were not on the internet. The President would deliver his address at a forthcoming face to face meeting. In the meantime he had sent the following message. "Please pass on my good wishes to all members, especially all those who have kept the ball rolling in these difficult times. I look forward to when we can all meet again 'in the flesh' (but suitably clad!)."
	<u>Resumption of face to face meetings</u>
9.1	TO felt that under Government guidelines, the August meeting would be the earliest one for a face to face meeting. In the meantime, arrangements were being made with speakers for the monthly talks to continue on line.
	<u>Trustees</u>
10.1	TO explained that under constitution two of the current trustees, himself and Catherine Hawkins had to stand down. They were both available for re-election.
10.2	No nominations for trustees had been received from members. Neither had there been any nominations for chair.
10.3	Robena Brown took the chair for this item. She explained that the current trustees were Trevor Ogden, Ken Hawkins, Catherine Hawkins and herself. Peter Wade-

	Martins and Sue Rockley were also members of the committee.
10.4	Robena put the proposal that, in the absence of other nominees, Trevor Ogden and Catherine Hawkins should be appointed trustees. The proposal was seconded by Ken Rockley and carried unanimously.
10.5	As no other nominations had been made for the role of chair, it was proposed by Peter Wade-Martins, seconded by Sue Walker and agreed unanimously that Trevor Ogden should be chair of DHT for the forthcoming year.
10.6	TO thanked Robena and resumed the chair.
	<u>Any other business</u>
11.1	<i>Proposal relating to on line general meetings</i> – Michael and Leslie Griffin had asked the meeting to consider the proposal that “the constitution of DHT be amended to say that any general meetings of the Trust might, where deemed necessary, be conducted on line”.
11.2	If the meeting approved this proposal by a simple majority, the trustees would consider the matter and work up an amendment to the constitution, which would need to be considered at a special general meeting and receive the approval of two thirds of the members. It would then need the approval of the Charity Commission. The special general meeting would probably take place at an ordinary face to face meeting.
11.3	Andrew Fielding asked the trustees to consider the inclusion of “deemed necessary” in the suggested wording, and to consider a sunset clause so that this arrangement did not last forever.
11.4	TO and KH felt that the Trust’s preference would always be to have face to face meetings. The amendment would simply allow general meetings to be held on line, if absolutely necessary. KH noted that when the constitution of the CIO had been created, care had been taken to allow the trustees’ powers to be as broad as possible, and he thought that a sunset clause was unnecessary. TO added that DHT could set its own rules for matters not covered in the constitution. It was agreed that the Trustees should consider the effect of the words “deemed necessary” in the proposed amendment to see if this needed closer definition.
11.5	The Trustees were happy with the rationale for the proposed change to the constitution so that it was not necessary to rely on emergency legislation to hold general meetings on line.
11.6	TO proposed that the meeting adopted the resolution, subject to the comments above. The proposal was seconded by K Hawkins and agreed unanimously. TO would contact the Griffins to thank them for the suggestion and inform them of the outcome.
	<u>Close of meeting</u>
12.1	TO thanked everyone for attending and ventured to hope that the coming year would be less complex than the last one.