

Dereham Heritage Trust

CIO number 1187140

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held by Zoom on Wednesday 9 February 2022

Present 18 members
Attending Phillip Duigan

Apologies Joan Cole, Diana Rowland, Sue Marsh, Megan Dennis, Susanna Wade-Martins

1 Welcome

1.1 The chairman, Trevor Ogden (TO), welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes of the 2021 AGM

2.1 The minutes of the 2021 AGM (the first AGM as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) had been circulated. No comments had been received and the minutes were approved.

3 Status of the meeting

3.1 TO explained the background to holding the AGM on line. The constitution as currently worded did not explicitly allow on-line general meetings. Given the Covid situation, the Charity Commission had given permission for the meeting to be held on-line provided the trustees were in agreement.

3.2 Members would be asked to vote on some issues later in the meeting – and votes would normally be taken by a show of hands. A proposal would be considered to amend the constitution so that future general meetings could be held on line. In order to ensure that there was a full record of that vote, TO would ask all attendees for their votes individually. The change to the constitution would require a 75% majority of those voting.

3.3 For the re-election of trustees, TO would ask if there were any objections. He would ask for a vote only if there were such objections.

3.4 The constitution did not require members to vote on the annual report or the adoption of the accounts as these were the responsibility of the trustees. Members' comments on these items would be welcome. Any critical comments would be considered by the trustees who would report back to the members.

3.5 The constitution allowed for a poll to be called which would require a written vote either by post or electronically. The chair or 10% of members present could demand a poll either before a vote taken by show of hands or at the declaration of the result. If a poll was called, it would be held within 30 days.

4 Chairman's report

4.1 The report had been circulated. In the circumstances TO felt that DHT had had a pretty successful year although the pandemic and continuing works at BBCM meant that it had not been possible to open the museum in 2021. TO thanked the committee members and everyone who had worked hard to keep the Trust going. He also thanked Sue Walker for running the website and preparing the Fenn/Paston exhibition, and Heather Ryder and Sue Marsh who had been working in the archive to bring the cataloguing up to date.

4.2 The trustees planned to open the museum on 29 April. There would be a major new exhibition on John and Ellenor Fenn, focusing on John's work on the Paston letters and

Ellenor's role as an educationalist. The displays were the result of collaboration with the Paston Footprints Project which had contributed £1400 towards the displays. This had enabled DHT to acquire a set of boards and a TV to be used in the museum to enhance the displays.

- 4.3 The opening of the Museum depended on having sufficient volunteers to act as stewards. The trustees were hoping that BCM would be open on Friday mornings and on Saturday mornings and afternoons. At present there was a shortfall in the number of stewards and members were asked to contact Catherine Hawkins if they could help fill the gaps. She would be delighted to help anyone who might be interested.
- 4.4 The committee would welcome more volunteers to undertake some of the jobs that needed doing to keep the Trust running smoothly. The committee had welcomed Hilary Williams recently, and over the next few weeks more details of the tasks/roles would be circulated.
- 4.5 The committee comprised the trustees plus Phillip Duigan as the representative of Dereham Town Council, Megan Dennis, and Hilary Williams who was feeling her feet before considering whether she would like to be a trustee. Its monthly meetings were currently by Zoom.

5 Resumption of face to face members' meetings

- 5.1 The committee had discussed whether meetings should resume at Trinity Church Hall. Other bodies had already resumed physical meetings, although Covid case numbers among the over 60s were rising.
- 5.2 The proposal from the committee was that face to face meetings should resume in April and TO asked members for their views. It was the intention that the talks would still be recorded live and made available to members. Matt Walker had kindly offered to help with the technology around this. There were, however, several members who did not have on line access.
- 5.3 It was agreed that it was helpful to continue to offer the on-line option as some people were still wary of going out to meetings.
- 5.4 There was a suggestion that more people would be willing to attend afternoon meetings, but it was felt that this would preclude people who were working.
- 5.5 It was agreed that face to face meetings should resume in April and that attendees should be asked to take lateral flow tests on the day of the meeting. It was not proposed that test result confirmation would be checked before allowing anyone in to the meeting.

6 General comments from members

- 6.1 Hilary Williams thanked the committee for organising the talks which had been excellent. TO noted that Ken Hawkins and Sue Rockley were responsible for arranging speakers, and he thanked the presenters who had been willing to present via Zoom. Only a couple had asked to defer and TO was grateful to those who had re-scheduled their talks to cover these deferrals.

7 Annual accounts and Treasurer's report

- 7.1 Ken Hawkins (KH) gave an overview of the accounts which had been independently examined by Jim Stebbings. KH thanked Jim for doing this. Because of its size, DHT was not required to have its accounts independently examined, but KH felt that it was a welcome additional safeguard.
- 7.2 KH had circulated the accounts and notes which set out the variations against budgeted income and expenditure for the archive, museum and trust. In summary, for the archive

there had been a shortfall of expenditure of £114, a deficit in income on the museum of £170, and a surplus of income for the trust of £222.

- 7.3 In total the Trust was £166 better off at the end of the year. To date there had been no draw down against the £10,000 Covid grant. The balance in the bank account at the end of 2021 was £17,600. KH felt that the Trust's financial position was good although 2021 had been a volatile year. The committee had set a budget for 2022 but again this contained a lot of guess work.
- 7.4 The Committee had decided to increase the admission charge for the museum from £2 to £3.
- 7.5 The Committee recommended that subscription rates should remain the same for 2022. Changes had been made so that people joining between September and December each year paid for six months' membership, and the committee had recently decided that for people joining in January or February their subscriptions would last until the renewal date on 1 March the following year.
- 7.6 TO noted that DHT received an annual grant of £1000 from Dereham Town Council. This was used to support the archive and museum. Members' subscriptions covered the Trust's costs around talks, publications, administration etc.
- 7.7 On behalf of the meeting, Robena Brown thanked KH for doing such a wonderful job as the Trust's treasurer. From her involvement in a wide range of organisations, she had worked with many treasurers and KH was one of the best she had ever come across. TO confirmed that KH struck the right balance between keeping an eye on costs and appreciating when flexibility was needed.

8 Thanks to Dereham Town Council and Phillip Duigan

- 8.1 TO had written to the Heritage and Open Spaces Committee of the Council to thank them for the support they provided to the museum and archive. He also thanked Phillip Duigan for his input. Phillip confirmed that the Town Council was very grateful to the Trust for operating the archive and museum.
- 8.2 TO commented that as well as providing these services for the town, the Trust wanted to play its part in making Dereham a better place to live.

9 The Fenn/Paston Project

- 9.1 TO noted that the Chairman of the Paston Project had told the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society that it was a 'brilliant exhibition', and that the Twitter feed for the Paston Footprints project had said that 'it was not to be missed!' TO recommended the display to all members.

10 Museum mentor's report

- 10.1 Megan Dennis, the mentor for BBCM, had been unable to attend the meeting but her report had been circulated. The committee greatly valued Megan's input and she kept an eye on its activities from the point of a view of a museum professional. She provided wise counsel and TO had had several discussions with her during the year. He recorded the Trust's thanks to Megan. KH noted that Megan was now with the National Trust as the Property Curator for the Blickling Estate.

11 Trustees

- 11.1 Under the CIO constitution, one third of the trustees were required to retire each year. The two trustees retiring were Robena Brown and Ken Hawkins and both were willing to stand for re-election. There were no objections and both were re-elected by a show of hands.

11.2 There were no further nominations for trustees.

12 Chairman

12.1 Under the CIO, the chairman was appointed by the trustees. TO confirmed that he was willing to continue as chair at least for a few more months and was therefore continuing in the role.

12.2 The trustees had agreed to ask the membership for any suggestions for someone to take over as chair. TO asked members to contact Ken Hawkins (or any trustee) if they wished to make a suggestion for the chair. It would then be considered by the committee in TO's absence.

13 Resolution on holding general meetings on line

13.1 The 2021 AGM had passed a resolution in principle for the constitution to be changed to allow general meetings on line.

13.2 The committee had drafted the following amendments to change the constitution

(10) Holding general meetings by electronic means

(a) General meetings may be held by suitable electronic means if the trustees decide that it is impracticable to meet the requirements of 11 (1) and 11(2) by a normal meeting.

(b) The means of holding the meeting must be agreed by the trustees and must permit each participant to communicate with all the other participants.

(c) Any member participating in a meeting which meets the requirements of (a) and (b) shall qualify as being present at the meeting.

(d) The procedures for Notice of the meeting, Chairing, and Quorum of an online meeting shall follow those in 11 (3), (4), and (5). Any members unable to attend electronically may appoint a proxy following the procedures in 11(7).

(e) The procedures for voting shall follow those in 11 (6). An exception is that votes on the election of a chair and to adjourn a meeting may only be taken by show of hands, including proxy votes.

13.3 All members present, and Joan Cole by proxy, confirmed in person that they approved the changes to the constitution.

13.4 KH noted that this would need to be reported to the Charity Commission although they did not have to approve the change.

14 Any other business

14.1 On behalf of the Trust, Sue Rockley thanked Trevor Ogden for all his work as chairman.

15 Close of meeting

15.1 TO thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

15.2 Members then enjoyed a quiz set by Robena Brown and Sue Rockley. An alternative quiz compiled by Phillip Duigan would be kept for a future occasion.