

FRIENDS OF HISTORIC ESSEX

Supporting the Essex Record Office

Registered Charity No. 235270

Minutes of the 69th Annual General Meeting held at Boxted Airfield Museum, Langham at 11 a.m. on Saturday 2nd July 2022

After a welcome to the Museum by Richard Turner, the FHE Chairman, Dr Christopher Thornton, welcomed everyone to the AGM. The President, Lord Petre, then took the chair.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from 20 members, whose names are shown at the end of these minutes.

2. Minutes of the 68th AGM held by email on 24th July 2021 due to Covid-19

The minutes were accepted as correct.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report and Address by the Chairman for the year ended 31st March 2022

The following report had been circulated to members and posted on the FHE website.

“The Year’s Activities

The committee has met three times at the Essex Record Office, with some members attending in person and others via Microsoft Teams. I would like to thank all the committee members for their continuing commitment and hard work for the charity. Current paid-up membership has gradually declined, and now stands at just 122 individual members and 36 institutions and councils, although renewals of subscriptions continue to arrive. The committee have therefore identified an urgent need for publicity to attract new members. We have an active Twitter account (594 followers), and now an Instagram account (51 followers), both set up by our Hon. Membership Secretary, Janice Gooch.

FHE continues to be in a good financial situation, assisted by lower activity due to the pandemic and some generous donations by members. We have continued to make grants for the acquisition of documents (see below). The £2,000 capital deriving from the winding up of the *Essex Journal* committee remains ring-fenced for future important document acquisitions. The committee look forward to a return to more normal circumstances in 2022-23 with an increase in events at ERO. We intend that FHE will support and contribute to these, and thus also help to raise our own profile.

Our publication *Printed Maps of Essex* continues to sell well, at the ERO and other outlets and through the efforts of the author, Peter Walker. Our Autumn 2021 newsletter was delayed, but finally distributed early in 2022. That for Spring 2022 is imminent. My thanks to Neil Wiffen for the newsletter’s excellent layout and production. More short articles or

reviews of books by members would be most welcome, especially on topics or projects that involve ERO sources or facilities.

University of Essex placements 2021 and 2022

In 2021 FHE supported two placements (Aaron Archer and Adam Campbell-Drew), both successfully completed. In June 2021 a new 3-year agreement was signed by FHE, ERO and the University of Essex formalising one placement of £750 for each year 2022 to 2024. The 2022 placement starts on 4 May, held by Callum Newton. He will be working with the Essex Sound and Video Archive on the Essex Folk Movement Oral History Project recordings, creating time-coded summaries and notes on sensitivities. Blog posts reflecting on the interviews in relation to music in ERO's broader folk collection will also be created.

Supporting the acquisition of documents

Much excitement was caused in 2021/22 by the possibility of acquiring another Walker map for the ERO collection. FHE was prepared to dig deep to ensure that this was enabled, but the ERO was able to secure a large grant from the Friends of the National Libraries sufficient to secure the map. A report is included in the Spring 2022 newsletter. Otherwise, our acquisitions over the year were fairly interesting if modest; a volume of receipts of Rookwood Hall, Abbess Roding, 1884-1899 (ERO, A15639); a collection of 50 OS survey maps that filled gaps in the ERO collection; the fishing diary of Frederick Wykeham Chancellor, 1892-1905 (ERO, A15412; D/DU 3318/1) and a log book of Ulting Mixed school 1876-1897 (ERO, A15739). See recent FHE newsletter for images and details of the latter two documents.”

At the AGM the Chairman, Dr Christopher Thornton, thanked Boxted Airfield Museum for hosting the event, and said he was pleased to report that the quorate figure had been reached. The Chairman's report was shorter than usual as there had been fewer activities due to Covid. Dr Thornton highlighted the gradual decline in membership and said FHE needs to co-operate more with ERO over events, and also liaise with other heritage organisations (he has already approached the Plume Library). He asked members to let the Committee know if they have any ideas to increase membership.

Mark Roberts said the AGM was important as it was always held in a place of interest. Stewart Seymour suggested having a poster advertising FHE. Alison Rowlands thanked FHE for its support of University of Essex placements which are very helpful to students.

5. Appointment of Examiner for year ended 31st March 2023

Proposed by the committee: Geraldine Willden.

This was unanimously agreed.

6. Financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2022

The report of the Treasurer, Ruth Earnshaw, had been emailed to members and posted on the FHE website.

“FHE reported a surplus of £704, compared to £2,638 for the previous year.

Income and Expenditure report

Income for the year was £3,705 vs £5,935 last year.

Subscription income was £1,895. This is £359 less than last year, reflecting a reduction in membership numbers. A further £456 gift aid was received on subscriptions and donations from 2020/21.

We received £970 in donations. This included £500 from the Bartleet Family Fund, and other donations from individuals, including cash donations at the Essex Record Office over the last two years. Note that donation income for 2021 was enhanced by a one off receipt from the *Essex Journal* of £2,000.

Income from sales of publications and other items was £234. Again, there was no income from the AGM or other events in the year.

Interest income was only £150 vs £543, reflecting lower interest rates in the year.

Expenditure for the year was £3,001, vs £3,297 last year.

The main expenditure items were £591 on document and book purchases, £1,500 to support two University of Essex placements at the ERO, and £656 newsletter costs.

Balance sheet

At 31st March 2022, FHE held £22,000 in National Savings income bonds earning 0.5%, £26,037 with Shawbrook Bank earning 0.1% and £17,072 in current accounts and cash. Total reserves were £65,126.

The Shawbrook Bank deposit had previously been invested for 1 year at a fixed rate, but was not reinvested on maturity due to the extremely low interest rates at the time. It has now been withdrawn for investment with Charity Bank at 1.25% for 1 year.”

The Treasurer said it had been a successful year even though subscriptions were down, and the balance sheet was healthy.

Acceptance of the financial statement was proposed by Ruth Earnshaw, and seconded by Lynn Marston. This was agreed unanimously.

7. Election of Honorary Officers under Rule 4 of the Constitution

Honorary Officers standing for re-election and proposed by the Executive Committee: Chairman, Dr Christopher Thornton; Vice-Chairman, Ken Crowe; Hon. Secretary, Jenny Butler; Hon. Treasurer, Ruth Earnshaw; Hon. Membership Secretary, Janice Gooch.

Agreed unanimously.

8. Appointment of Executive Committee under Rule 5 of the Constitution

Standing for re-election as Committee members: Jane Bedford, Alison Rowlands, Simon Coxall, Julie Miller, Sean O'Dell, Neil Wiffen. There were no other nominations.

Agreed unanimously.

9. Statement by an Essex Record Office representative

Martin Astell, Essex Record Office Manager, reported on various aspects of the service:

Certificates service

Now run by ERO, this was the busiest year yet, with a 35% average increase for August-March over the two previous years.

Talks and events

Apples and Orchards of Essex conference received good feedback and attracted people who had not been to ERO before.

Regular monthly talks have re-started.

The Romans, Saxons and Princely Burials conference was attended by 112 people, some travelling from elsewhere in the country.

ERO is hosting two "Re-Writing the Archive" workshops when ERO documents are a starting point for creative discussion and writing.

Projects

Communicating Connections is complete, including Marconi photographs digitised, oral history interviews recorded, website now online at www.marconi-stories.org.uk

The Model New Town- Harlow Development Corporation records (596 boxes) have been catalogued and are available on Essex Archives Online. 18 other Harlow accessions also catalogued.

John Graham Archive- ERO has assisted Harlow Art Trust to list the private archive of this architect, who worked with Sir Frederick Gibberd.

The People of 1381- an external project creating a database of people involved in the Peasants' Revolt. Research by Herbert Eiden using records in ERO. Launch of database was hosted by ERO, and is available at www.1381.online

Other HE partnerships

MA placement- Callum Newton has been working on Essex Folk Movement oral history project.

MA module-ERO will help Essex University with the delivery of a new module on 'Archives and Power', with the first students working on an oral history collection.

Other Sound Archive activities

Southend D/deaf community- workshop at Focal Point Gallery, Southend to discuss how stories of the deaf community can be accurately recorded.

Paul Simon's 80th birthday- a recording in the ESVA of possibly Simon's first live performance in the UK was sent to him in New York.

Decarbonisation

Solar panels were installed on the roof of ERO and are generating electricity, impacting the energy ERO uses.

Cataloguing etc

An extensive collection of Essex County Council and Southend County Borough Council vehicle licensing cards c. 1914-1974 are being cleaned, repackaged and stored. 912 Witham building plans 1915-1948 have been added to the online catalogue. Further Chelmsford building plans, up to 1928, have also been added.

Walker map purchase

ERO is planning an event to show the Walker map of the Beckingham estates in Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Tolleshunt Major 1616, and possibly other maps. FHE members will have priority for tickets.

Bequest

A generous bequest of over £26,000 was received from the estate of the late Mrs Margaret Bloomfield who, with her husband, had used ERO for family history research.

In reply to a question Martin confirmed that there will be no dedicated parking (except spaces for disabled users) at ERO. The building is in Chelmsford Borough Council's Riverside development area and no parking is allocated. A new road will go by the side of ERO and across a bridge (replacing the bailey bridge) to Baddow Road, and this will include a walking route.

In reply to a question about the storage of the John Graham Archive, Martin said it will remain with Harlow Art Trust.

10. Resolutions proposed by members of the Friends

None were received.

The Chairman raised the matter of the quorum for the AGM being 25, which is one fifth of our membership. He suggested this could be lowered, with the agreement of the Charity Commission. Alternatives suggested: a percentage of the membership, introduction of proxy votes, have the AGM online as well, no quorum.

It was agreed that the Chairman and Secretary should investigate the Charity Commission rules.

In reply to a question about the use of Eventbrite to order tickets, Neil Wiffen said tickets can still be ordered in the searchroom and on the telephone, but Eventbrite allows ERO to contact everyone who has booked or to refund money if necessary.

Apologies for absence

Ted Buttling, Karen Dennis, Ken Edwards, Maralyn Ferrier, Keith Hook, Ron Howlett, Sue Howlett, Helen Kemp, Michael Leach, Dorothy Lockwood, Margaret Martin, Julie Miller, Joanna Moncrieff, Ann Naylor, Norma Newsome, Julie Sherman, Nicola Thomas, Lesley Vingoe, Barry Willden, Geraldine Willden (20)

Attendance at AGM

Martin Astell, Jane Bedford, Tony Bedford, Pat Bodin, Jenny Butler, Simon Coxall, Ken Crowe, Mike Durgan, Shirley Durgan, Herbert Eiden, Ruth Earnshaw, Sarah Ensor, Janice Gooch, Roger Kennell, Malcolm Lees, Lynn Marston, Sandra Newens, Thomas Newens, Sean O'Dell, David Patient, Lord Petre, Mark Roberts, Alison Rowlands, Derrick Ruse, Lesley Ruse, Maureen Scollan, Stewart Seymour, Christopher Thornton, Neil Wiffen (29)

JIB

18th July 2022