

The Friends of Historic Essex

Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2023

AGM papers

Papers by e-mail: members registered to receive e-mails will have received the Agenda, booking form and Chairman's report by e-mail.

Papers by post: members who have asked for postal mail will have received the Agenda, booking form and Chairman's report by post.

All reports and papers, with the 2022 AGM minutes, see: <https://friendsofhistoricessex.org/news/>

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 officers and committee members for their continuing commitment and hard work for the charity. FHE continues to be in a good financial situation, and we thank our Hon. Treasurer, Ruth Earnshaw, for so ably managing our accounts. During the year FHE received a donation of £1,000 from the Friends of Southend Museums when that organisation was wound up. Our current paid-up membership now stands at 129 individual members and 37 institutions and councils, a slight overall increase. Our active Twitter account has 635 followers. Thanks to our Hon. Membership Secretary, Janice Gooch, and also to Neil Wiffen, for following up on potential new members. Please pass on to Janice any ideas you have about people who may be interested in supporting the ERO by joining the Friends.

Events and Publications

Our Autumn 2022 newsletter was again slightly delayed, but finally distributed early in 2023. That for Spring 2023 is imminent. Thanks to Neil Wiffen for the excellent content and arranging new printers. More short articles or reviews of books by members would be most welcome, especially on topics or projects that involve ERO sources or facilities. The ERO events programme is now back in full swing, and FHE volunteers helped support the *Walkers of Hanningfield: Mapmakers of Tudor and Stuart Essex* event on 21 October. We are now entering the 70th year of the existence of the Friends and proposals have been approved by the FHE Committee for a celebration event in 2024 and the publication of a booklet with the working title 'Essex Record Office in 70 Documents'. More information will follow in future newsletters.

University of Essex placements 2023

There has not been a University of Essex placement in 2023 due to a lack of applicants. A review is taking place between representatives of FHE and the University to discuss ways forward.

Supporting the acquisition of documents

FHE has continued to purchase manuscripts for the ERO at auction or through e-bay, though unfortunately our bids were not always successful thus lowering expenditure. Acquisitions during the year included four court rolls of the manor of Curles in Clavering 1564, 1570, 1601, 1607 costing £338 (Clavering Landscape History Group kindly contributed £50) (ERO A15900); a large set of Castle Hedingham deeds 1728-1896 for £400 (ERO A15862); a power of attorney relating to Bicknacre Priory in 1287 (ERO D/DU 3466) purchased at auction for £500; a deed relating to Brentwood in 1841 (ERO, D/DU 3233add ref) was purchased for £62.50; Maldon deed of 1599 bought on e-bay for \$350 US Dollars (ERO, D/DU 3449). In most cases postage costs were extra. The Friends have also purchased items for the ERO library.

Finally, it was with much sadness that FHE members learnt that ERO Archivist Katharine Schofield had passed away on 15 November. Katharine was a very popular member of ERO staff as well as being a fine historian. The ERO held an event on 10 February 2023 to remember Katharine and donations to FHE were received in her memory, including a very generous one from her family.