

Essex Historic Buildings Group



AGM 2022 Meeting Minutes

Zoom meeting

8.00pm on Tuesday 25 June 2022

Present:

Martin Bridge (MB) Chair
John Payne (JP) Treasurer
John Walker (JW)
Jenny Bishop (JB)
Brenda Watkin (BW)
Elphin Watkin (EW)
Tim Howson (TH)
Anthony Clodd
Celia Clodd
Anne Padfield
Duncan Padfield
Bill Hardy
Peter Patrick
Deborah Patrick
Mike Hibbs
Pam Walker
Angela Sills
Andrea Kirkham
Joe Thompson
Helen Remfry
John Remfry
Marcia Payne
Alan Bayford
Barbara Martin
David Martin

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from David Andrews, Billie Rochford, Helen Gibson, Terry Vanner and Jane Briscoe.

2. Minutes of AGM for 2021

Copies of the 2021 minutes were previously distributed via the Newsletter. David Andrews. Item 6 etc The Minutes were accepted changes. There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report (MB)

There is a great danger in the Chair's report being very repetitive year on year – but of course the last couple of years have been far from normal. We had no AGM in 2020 for obvious reasons, and held an online meeting in October last year. Things have been rather different since that day back in March 2020 when we first went into lockdown.

Whilst for individuals and families the consequences have varied from tragic to just inconvenient, the impact on the EHBG has been – let's say, interesting. We fairly quickly managed to move, like many other organisations, to online Zoom meetings. This has been beneficial for some – those who don't like venturing out on a cold, dark Friday evening, or are far from Chelmsford – and a little disappointing for others, missing the camaraderie, chit chat, and general conversation possible in a face-to-face meeting. It has been possible to have a wider audience from all over the country, and indeed we have had regular

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participants from further afield, but numbers overall have been similar to those who turn up to Moulsham Mill.

As usual I am indebted to my fellow committee members who keep things ticking over, Jenny for arranging the Zoom meetings and notifying everyone, Jenny and Terry for running the website, John Payne and John Walker for keeping on top of the online orders we have been receiving via the website, and the continuing high standard of the Newsletter, largely down to John Walker, but others who have written up talks.

John Payne has held 'garage sales' of books from the likes of Pat Ryan's estate and others who have generously passed on books for 'recycling' ('upcycling?') to members, bringing in further income to the Group.

Other members of the committee have been on hand via email and the odd Zoom meeting to give advice and exchange ideas, and I am grateful; to them all for their continued input and willingness to carry on.

The situation at Cressing Temple, where we have for many years provided free guiding at weekends to the wonderful barns and the rest of the site, is for ever changing. My understanding is that recently some areas are not accessible, and no guiding is currently being undertaken.

Many will be aware that our sister group, HEARS, has recently folded, and I know there has been some overlap in membership and speakers over the years. Our Group may eventually gain some financial assets from this sad demise, once everything has been finalised, but it is sad to see such a well-established group go under – and a lesson to us all to do what we can to continue – which underlines the voluntary input I've mentioned just now. The Committee offered free EHBG membership to HEARS members not already members of EHBG for the rest of the year, and I understand one person has taken this up.

On a happier note, it is good to see Tim Howson has recently organised a trip to see buildings in the Maldon area – which was 'sold out' within a day. A sign I think that folk are happy to get back out and about.

With that positive note I shall hand over to John for the Treasurer's Report.

4. Treasurers Report (JP)

Members will recall that because of Covid restrictions it was not possible to hold a traditional AGM in either 2020 or 2021. With no end to restrictions then insight a virtual Zoom AGM was held in July 2021 at which the accounts for 2019 and 2020 were considered and approved. That we can now return to the traditional AGM format is a welcome sign of normality which hopefully will extend to future group activities.

Members may remember that for the Covid restricted 2020 the Group had a relatively small deficit (expenditure over income) of £177. If unhappy with that they will at first sight be horrified to see in the current accounts the consideration that the deficit has grown to £3118. However 2021 has been an exceptional year for EHBG, particularly as a publishing Group, with the issue of revised, updated and enlarged edition of the book on Cressing Temple, entirely financed by the Group (production cost £2,582), and for the EHBG grant aided (£1,000) book "Timber Framed -Buildings of Colchester" published by ESAH. These two exceptional costs together exceed the deficit and are paid, in effect, from accumulated funds but it should be noted that there will be a recovery of funds as the stock of books is sold. Day-to-day expenditure can be seen to be kept within current income levels. The Group also took the opportunity to revise and reissue the " Welcome Booklet" which is issued to new members.

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Otherwise the accounts show the impact of the Covid restrictions in the omission of certain categories of Expenditure (Meeting rooms, Refreshments etc.) and expansion of others (Internet Services, PayPal fees, Zoom) with those traditional retained services showing increased costs, primarily in postage although you will see this in the accounts the postage associated with the free issue of the Crossing book to members is shown separately from routine mailings. Members will also be aware that from November 2021 the Newsletter has been delivered unfolded in a C4 envelope which the Committee feels improves both its utility to members and helps the distribution effort, albeit at some extra cost.

Income necessarily suffered because of the Covid restrictions. Book sales increased over those for 2020 as sales through the website shop gained traction, but there was no income from the sale of books from the physical bookstall. The virtual day school, a Group first, made a small profit.

Subscription income, set at the same subscription level as in preceding years, increased by over £300 as membership increased although that increase also raised some costs.

Despite the difficulties of the year finances remain robust and should to do so as the Group establishes a program to encourage member participation in the physical world in the mix with the virtual world to which we have been introduced. The Group balance at the bank was £13,124 at the end of the financial year to 31st of December 2021.

I would like to thank Clive Hallet for his assistance and for reviewing the accounts. In newsletter approved by all present.

5. Editor's Report (DA)

To follow

6. Proposed change to the constitution

The proposed change to the constitution was approved by all present, additional nomination Charmiane Hawkins. The committee will review the constitution outside the meeting

7. Election of officers and committee

Accounts examiner Clive Hallett is willing to stand for the next year. This was approved

8. Future meetings

The Committee will consider zooming our face to face meetings when they commence. Also it will be possible to zoom speakers who live a long way away so they can be 'seen' at face to face meetings. This hybrid approach was approved.

9. Any other business

David Andrews proposed that we fund the dendrochronology dating of Mundon church. This was approved.

The website receives between 110 and 190 separate visitors each month