

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Devon's Archives held at North Devon 30 September 2017

Present:

Committee: John Allan (President), Ian Mortimer (Chairman), Sue Jackson, Ellie Jones, Paul Luscombe, Graham Parnell, Peter Towey (Membership Secretary), Stuart Tyler (Secretary)

Other attendees: Lynda Bailey, Roger Beare, Lizzie Bethune, Frances Billinge, Sarah Child, Michael Goddard, Andrew Jones, Celia King, Jan Parnell, Mike Sampson, Jenny Towey, Anita Travers, Martin Watts, Joy Wooding

Total attendance: 22

The meeting began at 10.45am.

1. Welcome by the President

The President welcomed those present. He remarked that it was particularly gratifying to be holding the meeting at the North Devon Record Office, marking the fact NDRO had emerged triumphantly from a period of great uncertainty.

2. Apologies

The Secretary read out a list of those apologies received, being:

Margaret Andrews, Brian Carpenter, Todd Gray, Clare Greener, Derek Jackson, Rachel Jackson, Sue Lintern, Ian Maxted, Kate Osborne, Richard Spear.

3. Confirmation and adoption of the minutes of AGM of 30 September 2017

The President invited any comments or amendments to the previous year's minutes. The minutes were duly confirmed and adopted without any comments or corrections.

4. Chairman's report

See attached Chairman's report.

The President added his thanks and gratitude to Ian Mortimer for all his work as Chairman, particularly in making *Devon Deciphered* a reality.

5. Treasurer's report

See attached Treasurer's report.

Ian Mortimer read out the Treasurer's report on behalf of Ian Maxted. He also indicated he had a signed letter from a book-keeper who had independently checked the FODA's accounts, which members were invited to view, if desired.

The President put the accounts to the members present for formal acceptance. A motion to accept them was proposed by Graham Parnell, seconded by Paul Luscombe, and duly accepted by the membership.

6. Membership Secretary's report

See attached Membership Secretary's report.

The President put the report to the members present for formal acceptance. A motion to accept them was proposed by Martin Watts, seconded by Anita Travers, and duly accepted by the membership.

7. Election of Officers 8. Election of Committee Members

It was noted that the Chairman, Treasurer and Membership Secretary were all standing for re-election. There were no nominations for new candidates in these roles, and therefore Ian Mortimer, Ian Maxted and Peter Towey were all standing for re-election.

With regards to the Secretary role, the President explained that Stuart Tyler was standing down and Frances Billinge had agreed to take on the role. However, Ellie Jones, as an existing committee member, had agreed to act as Secretary for the next two meetings in order to give Frances time to familiarise herself with the workings of the FODA committee.

With regards to the Programme Secretary role, John Allan had acted in this role in addition to being President in 2016-2017. For 2017-2018, Ian Mortimer indicated he would similarly be willing to take on the role in addition to that of Chairman. However, Ian noted, given that it was hoped to more effectively coordinate FODA's event programme with the Devon History Society and plan this programme well in advance, that a replacement Programme Secretary would ideally already need to be lined-up by Summer 2018.

The President explained that James Gregory and Paul Luscombe both intended to stand down as committee members.

The above nominations and candidates were put to the members en bloc. Paul Luscombe proposed they be accepted and Celia King seconded this, and the elections were duly approved by the membership.

9. Any other business

a) National Monuments Conservation Trust bid (Sidmouth papers)

The Chairman outlined DHC's bid to the NMCT for money to help fund conservation work on the nationally (or indeed internationally) significant Viscount Sidmouth (Addington family) papers. He explained that at their last meeting the committee had pledged £2000 towards the bid's match-funding.

The President invited comment from attendees – there was general assent that this was a worthwhile use of FODA's funds.

b) Newsletter

The contents of the FODA newsletter was discussed, specifically the lists of recent accessions from the various repositories (principally museums), around the county.

Ian Mortimer asked those present whether they felt we were currently missing any smaller archive-collecting bodies in terms of those submitting a list of recent accessions for the newsletter.

Frances Billinge wondered whether the Teignmouth Port Authority might hold what could be considered to be archival records.

Anita Travers explained that around 20 years ago she had participated in a survey exercise of archives in local museums in Devon and noted many museums might welcome some way of updating the public as to their holdings.

Ellie Jones suggested that whilst it might not be desirable to receive reports from some of the smaller bodies and groups in the county for every edition, there might be scope for more occasional articles (which could perhaps be wider reports on any archives-related activities rather than simply a list of recent accessions).

c) Documents for sale at auction

The Chairman highlighted the importance of FODA members (or indeed members of other similar organisations in Devon) acting as the 'eyes and ears' of the committee in terms of identifying documents for sale with as much lead-in time as possible. A recent auction of historic documents relating to the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital was given as an example where, if the documents had been spotted early, the chances of a successful bid could have been increased.

Andrew Jones confirmed that Ian Mortimer's article for DHS members (which asked DHS to also be on the look-out for documents on sale) was published, but in the online version of the Journal rather than the print edition.

Peter Towey suggested an 'adopt an auctioneer' scheme - i.e. individual FODA members choosing an auction house, perhaps one close to where they lived and routinely monitored their website on behalf of FODA and Devon's archive repositories. John Allan and Ian Mortimer felt there was potential merit in this idea

and it was agreed this would be added to agenda of next committee meeting for further discussion.

The AGM concluded at 11.30am.