**FRIENDS OF DEVON’S ARCHIVES**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

11. 30 a.m. Tuesday 4 November 2021

Devon Rural Archive, Shilstone House, Modbury

**Minutes**

**In Attendance - Committee**John Allan (President), Katharine Chant (Chair), Frances Billinge (Secretary), Ian Maxted (Treasurer)*,* Brian Carpenter*,* Abi Gray (Programme Officer), Sue Jackson (Publicity Officer),Deborah Watson

**Other Members** - Des Atkinson, Jean Carter; Judith Farmer, Sue Lintern, Ian Mortimer, Martin Watts.

1. **Welcome by President**. John Allan was pleased to at last be able to welcome members to a face- to- face meeting.
2. **Apologies** - Marion Hardy, Celia King, Carol Macfadzean, Kate Osborne, Gillian Selley; Janet Tall, Peter Towey; Stuart Windsor
3. **Confirmation and Adoption of the Minutes of AGM November 2020**

Noted that Ian Mortimer had sent apologies and was not present. Proposer Abi Gray, seconder Brian Carpenter. Agreed unanimously.

1. **Chair’s Report**- Katharine Chant.

Full report to be posted on FoDA website. Katharine Chant noted her intention that FoDA’s work should respond to issues of climate change and sustainability. She listed the acquisitions to which FoDA had contributed, as well as its continuing support for various projects. Katharine Chant thanked John Allan for his extensive and unique contribution as President over several years and also the outgoing secretary and membership secretary for all they had done.

1. **Treasurer’s Report-** Ian Maxted

Previously circulated. Accounts to be posted on FoDA website. Noted that there continues to be a reasonable finance available to support the purchased of archives. Proposer Sue Jackson, seconder Abi Gray. Agreed unanimously

1. **Membership Secretary’s report** – Peter Towey

Previously circulated. Noted that the membership continues to be stable and is currently 160.

1. **Election of Chairman and Other Officers Willing to Continue to Stand for a Further Year**

Katharine Chant Chair, Ian Maxted Treasurer, Abi Gray Programme Officer, Sue Jackson publicity Officer, Deborah Watson.

**Election of Other Committee Member**

Des Atkinson proposed by Katharine Chant. Seconder Ian Mortimer. Agreed unanimously. Des Atkinson noted that he would leave the room when the committee in future discussed aspects of his role as supervisor of the Norden project in order to preclude any conflict of interest.

**Election of Secretary**

Clare Maudling, who has extensive experience in historical research, proposed by Katharine Chant, seconder Brian Carpenter. The meeting was informed that Clare Maudling will be taking over the role of administrator for the Norden project as Ros Palmer is resigning.

Proposer Martin Watts, seconder Ian Mortimer. Agreed unanimously

**Election of Membership Secretary.**

Abi Gray proposed by Katharine Chant, seconder Debbie Watson. Agreed unanimously.

John Allan thanked Peter Towey for his many years as membership secretary and in particular for the sterling work he had done in digitising membership details and keeping updated on data protection requirements; Frances Billinge was also thanked for her efficiency over recent years.

**Appointment of President**- Katharine Chant took the chair.

John Allan was thanked for his twelve years of tireless work on behalf of FoDA. Ian Mortimer, as past chairman, thanked John Allan for his excellent and aspirational contribution which helped to focus the work of the society. Brian Carpenter echoed this and particularly thanked John Allan for being so willing to attend committee meetings and to help steer the work of FoDA.

It was noted that this role is not a requirement but it has been extremely helpful to have someone to give advice. At present no one has been proposed for this specialist role and it was agreed to keep the position of President in abeyance.

1. **Proposal for FoDA and Devon History Society Joint Group Membership.**

Supporting paper from Abi Gray and Katharine Chant:

***Devon’s Local History Group Network Dual Affiliated Membership of Devon History Society and Friends of Devon’s Archives.***

***Aim***

*To create a local history network by establishing a formal link between the affiliated local group members of both Devon History Society (DHS) and Friends of Devon’s Archives (FoDA).*

***Purpose***

*To encourage and facilitate communication between local history groups that will ultimately (a) promote the study of Devon’s history, and (b) support the preservation, use and safe keeping of the county’s Archives. The scheme reflects the aims of both organisations and will also help to raise their profile amongst local history groups.*

***Any shared membership should be****:*

*• fair and beneficial to both DHS and FoDA;*

*• attractive to prospective members and promoted appropriately;*

*• simple to understand and operate;*

*• transparent (participating members will need to know who to contact);*

*• affordable;*

*• reviewed after 12 months and adapted as necessary, and then reviewed at regular intervals thereafter.*

***Background Information***

*1. There are 69 local history groups affiliated to DHS and 10 affiliated to FoDA; only seven local history groups are currently affiliated to both organisations.*

*2. The cost of joining DHS as an affiliated local group is £15 per year, but this is set to increase to £20, if approved at the AGM in October 2021. Local group subscription to FoDA is £20 per year.*

*3. Subscriptions to DHS are due in May, whilst FoDA membership begins in January.*

***Proposal***

*To offer dual affiliated membership of DHS and FoDA to local history groups, at a discounted membership rate. Local groups opting to join either DHS or FoDA for £20 will be offered membership of the other organisation for a discounted rate of £10. This means that the total cost of dual membership is £30. It is essential that the benefits of dual membership are clearly defined and that there is an incentive to join both groups.*

*Abi Gray is the current liaison officer for local groups affiliated to DHS and it is proposed that she should hold a similar role within FoDA. She will maintain a database of the affiliated local groups, with contact details, and encourage communication between them. An - 2 - electronic mailing list will be created to contact all groups with dual membership, but both organisations will have the freedom to contact affiliated groups independently of one another.*

*FoDA and the option of dual membership should be advertised to local groups who are already subscribed to DHS, and vice versa. Groups that are not affiliated to either organisation should also be invited to take up the offer.*

*Those already subscribed to both organisations will need to be contacted to ensure that they are happy to continue their dual membership, at a reduced rate. This should be done as soon as possible so that standing orders and direct debits can be adjusted accordingly. There would be no change for groups that continue with just single membership of either DHS or FoDA.*

***Finance***

*The income from dual affiliation should be split 50/50 on an annual basis. Payments would need to be made in the correct financial year, but DHS have agreed to take the lead on making sure this is possible.*

*Based on current subscription rates, DHS should not receive less income by offering dual affiliated membership, as they will still receive £15 per group per year. If no new groups take up dual membership, then FoDA could receive £35 less per year, however, it will only require three new groups to opt for dual membership to ensure FoDA’s income from dual membership is increased.*

***The Benefits of Dual Membership to Local Groups***

* *A communication network that provides updates, about local history matters, opportunities, and projects. Updates sent to a nominated contact for circulation amongst the local group’s membership*
* *A forum to seek information, share knowledge and solve problems with other affiliated local groups.*
* *Promotion, support, and assistance in the collection, preservation and conservation of records and other material of historical interest held in the archives of the Devon County Council and elsewhere.*
* *Access to records, sometimes through the publication of documents relevant to Devon, and financial support for the acquisition and conservation of Devon documents.*
* *A link with the South West Heritage Trust and thus the Devon Heritage Centre and North Devon Record Office, as well as The Box.*
* *The opportunity to participate in collaborative research projects such as ‘Devon in the 1920s’ and the translation of the Norden manorial survey.*
* *A list of speakers and their topics.*
* *Discounted access to DHS and FoDA events, including one free place at the annual conference and AGM.*
* *A single hard copy of the Devon Historian, and the possibility of extra copies at a discounted rate.*
* *Electronic copies of Devon History News and the FoDA newsletter sent to a nominated contact.*
* *A page on the DHS website, and the opportunity to promote their work and events.*

Discussion of the advantages of such membership to increase the reach of FoDA’s work. Possibility of agreeing to reduction of membership fee to assist this. Also noted possibility of reaching a wider membership for donations for particular projects/acquisitions. Noted that DHS twitter feed reaches a wide audience some of whom are far younger than FoDA’s current membership. Ian Maxted pointed out that issues such as different financial subscription years would also need to be addressed. Proposed by Ian Mortimer that committee should explore this joint affiliation further and negotiate a fee which would be acceptable to members, seconded by Brian Carpenter. Agreed unanimously.

**10.** **AOB**

Ian Mortimer asked for information on why the Cary project had been turned down by The National Archives. It was noted that the funding stream was oversubscribed.

Ian Mortimer referred to Katharine Chant’s aim to promote environmental issues of sustainability through FoDA, and he noted that Devon as a rural county has considerable historic information on sustainable living over the centuries. He suggested a project to research this. Agreed this should be an item at next FoDA committee.

Debbie Watson asked for an update on acquisition of the Debenhams’ archive . Noted that this was headed up by Somerset Heritage Centre, who have assisted with storage, with support from the Business Archive Council.

**11.** **Date and venue of AGM 2022**

Agreed that AGM would be held at a similar time in 2022 with the possibility of Plymouth as a venue, but noting the difficulty of attracting attendance for any meetings outside Exeter. Agreed that FoDA Committee would decide.